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Friends - A Letter to Benjamin Hawkes

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A LETTER
TO
BENJAMIN HAWES, Esq. M.P.
BEING
STRICTURES
ON THE
"MINUTES OF EVIDENCE"
TAKEN BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE
ON THE
BRITISH MUSEUM;
With an Appendix,
CONTAINING
**HEADS OF INQUIRY RESPECTING THE IMPROVEMENT OF
THE MUSEUM,**
&c. &c.

By EDWARD EDWARDS.

"Whereas, all arts and sciences have a connection with each other, and discoveries in natural philosophy, and other branches of speculative knowledge, for the advancement and improvement whereof the said Museum or collection was intended, do and may, in many instances, give help and success to the most useful experiments and inventions; therefore, to the end, that the said Museum may be preserved and maintained, NOT ONLY FOR THE INSPECTION AND ENTERTAINMENT OF THE LEARNED AND THE CURIOUS, BUT FOR THE GENERAL USE AND BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC; be it enacted," &c.—*An Act to incorporate the British Museum, 26 Geo. II, preamble.*

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE following Letter is intended to be the first of a short series on the Evidence taken before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the British Museum ; the general object of which will be, to suggest means of practical improvement.

It is also hoped it may, in some degree, supply the place of an Epitome of that Evidence, by directing attention to the chief points contained therein, and thereby inducing persons better qualified than the present writer, to express their sentiments, and point out other and more efficient means of improvement. Many persons well able to do this may not have the leisure to peruse a large folio volume.

This first Letter relates chiefly to the management and condition of the Library, and to the opinions expressed in the Evidence regarding the objects and purposes of the Museum generally. The intention with which the 'Heads of Inquiry' are submitted, will be found stated in the Letter itself, and in an introductory note prefixed to the Appendix.

Feb. 15, 1836.

A LETTER, &c.

SIR,

IT is to you, I believe, the public are indebted for the appointment of a Select Committee of the House of Commons, which sat during the last Session, on the condition and management of the British Museum; and common report further ascribes to you the chief conduct of that inquiry, so far as it then advanced; to you, therefore, I take the liberty of addressing the following observations on the evidence already published, together with some suggestions, submitted, with great deference, for the consideration of the Committee, when it shall have been reappointed.

An inquiry into the condition, management, and affairs of the British Museum has been long called for. Loud and frequent have been the complaints of its narrow accessibility—of the extremely imperfect state of its collections—of its want of adaptation to the progressive changes of science in various departments; and, in general, of an inaction which is alleged to have characterized its management of late years, notwithstanding a very observable increase of the just demands of the public upon it.

To these already numerous complaints I have seen, since the greater part of the following observations were written, an addition of no small importance, considering the lofty character of the authority whence it proceeds—that of the late Sir Humphry Davy.

In the Memoirs of that illustrious philosopher, by his brother Dr. John Davy, just published, appear the following passages:—

“About this time” [Feb. 1829,—about three months before his lamented death] “or shortly after, during his illness, he expressed his views respecting the British Museum, pointing out some of its deficiencies, and suggesting a plan for its improvement. He had thought much on the subject, having been well acquainted with the establishment in his capacity of Trustee, as President of the Royal Society; on which account I think it right to give his sentiments, as they were written down from his dictation, with the hope that some of its hints may be followed for the benefit of the Museum.

* * * * *

“‘I believe [he said] no country can be placed lower than our own in respect to collections of ancient art or modern science. A few liberal-minded patriotic men have done much by their private collections; and some particular institutions or colleges, by their private means, have afforded resources to scientific men; but *our National Establishment, the British Museum, is unworthy of a great people*, and is even inferior to many of those belonging to second-rate states on the Continent: yet there have been considerable sums of money devoted to the objects of this collection, and it contains some choice marbles, and some interesting specimens in natural history; and far more *might* have been done with the sums voted for the purpose by Parliament, had they been judiciously applied.

“‘When the British Museum was first established, in consequence of the bequest by Sir Hans Sloane, President of the Royal Society, of his splendid collections to the country, the trustees were either great officers of state, owing their appointment to their offices, or some persons of science, art, and letters, associated with them, elected by the principal trustees. At first, the leading trustees of the elected class were either distinguished members of the Royal Society, or highly accomplished noblemen and gentlemen, possessed of refined knowledge in art, or profound knowledge in science. The last scientific trustee elected was Mr. Henry Cavendish. *Lately, the elections have been almost exclusively made from branches of the aristocracy, or gentlemen of some parliamentary influence.* The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, and the Speaker of the House of Commons, are considered as the really active members of the trust; and, overpowered as those great officers must be, with the religious, legal, and legislative affairs of the country, it cannot be supposed that they can have much leisure, or much opportunity, to attend to the government or arrangement of the national collections.

“‘All the officers of the Museum, who ought to be either efficient librarians or curators of the house, used to be elected in turn by the Archbishop of Can-

terbury and the Speaker of the House of Commons; or the late Chancellor, Lord Eldon, always refused to act as trustee, considering, probably, with great propriety, that he had other duties more essential to his office to perform. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that amongst the curators, assistant librarians, and sub-librarians, there should be found many persons taken from the inferior departments of the church and of the public offices; places abounding with respectable, well-educated men, but not the natural seminaries of either naturalists or of persons of refined and profound taste in antiquities, collections of works of art, and monuments of the genius of the great people of antiquity.

" " If men of the highest distinction, as to scientific character, had always occupied the most exalted situations in the Museum, either as curators of the collections or as zoologists, ornithologists, entomologists, mineralogists, botanists, and superintendents of the ancient collections of sculpture and painting; and if the salaries of such officers had been made respectable, and their rank a gratifying and enviable one,—there would always have been a sufficient number of aspirants after such situations, and we should not have required the assistance of foreigners in that establishment which ought to be the natural school of our academies in science and art. But unfortunately, in England, science is not the taste either of the court or of the government.

* * * * *

" " There must be a general system of change in every thing belonging to the Institution before there can be any system of radical improvement. *Each department must be preserved separate and distinct from every other.* The sculpture must be judged by men who have shewn their knowledge and taste with regard to that branch of the fine arts. The collection and arrangement of paintings must be trusted either to artists themselves, or to refined judges of the art. The geologist should have his department entirely to himself; and the mineralogist would not find even the present treasures of the British Museum too extensive for much active labour, philosophical research, and even useful discovery in the variety of their arrangement and bearings; and a good geologist by connecting the history of the specimens of inorganic nature with those of living animals, might open to the world a number of curious and very extraordinary truths. [Then follows a suggestion of the propriety of keeping the libraries separate from the Museum, as has since been done.]

* * * * *

" " *It appears to me, that the present is the best moment for attempting a radical and fundamental change in every thing belonging to this ancient, misapplied, and, I may almost say useless, Institution.* In every part of the metropolis people are crying out for knowledge; they are searching for her even in corners and by-ways; and such is their desire for her, that they are

disposed to seize her by illegitimate means, if they cannot obtain her by fair and just ones. This, then is the moment to give energy to their efforts, and for the legislature to sanction what reason has so long required."

Memoirs of the Life of Sir Humphry Davy, by his Brother, John Davy, M.D. F.R.S. Lond., 1836. vol. ii, pp. 342-4, note.

Such were the opinions of Sir Humphry Davy; opinions formed in no hasty manner, on no imperfect knowledge, but after a long and intimate acquaintance with the Museum as one of its official trustees. Surely, if any justification were required for instituting a searching inquiry, such opinions, so formed, would alone afford a sufficient one. As well, however, the best justification of the commencement, as the most urgent reason for the continuance of the inquiry, will be found, even at the present stage, in the "Minutes of Evidence" already published.

The great point now appears to be, to direct public attention to the means of improvement. It is so much easier to complain than to point out these, that,—notwithstanding the favorable opportunity afforded by the appointment of the Committee,—few persons seem to have troubled themselves with the last consideration in respect of the British Museum. Many a topic, merely of the passing hour, has gained more of the public attention—has been more noticed by the public newspapers*, than has, as yet, an inquiry which undoubtedly may be made the means of greatly promoting the interests of literature and science in our country.

That, ultimately, this result will follow, I, for one, entertain not the slightest doubt. The Committee will resume its labours with the advantage of having already placed before the public not only an important mass of evidence and illustrative in-

* There are two newspapers of which honourable mention ought to be made, by way of exception, as regards this subject—the '*Morning Herald*' and the '*Globe*.' In the former, some valuable papers—chiefly of a preliminary nature—appeared before the commencement of the inquiry, and during its early stages. In the latter, have been recently published some highly interesting accounts of foreign museums and libraries, partly derived from the House of Commons' Returns, printed in the Appendix to the Museum Report, and partly from other sources.

formation respecting the Museum itself, but also a series* of returns, hardly less important, on the condition and management of similar institutions abroad. These exhibit to us some things we shall do well to avoid, but certainly more that we should do well to imitate. Taken altogether, they *prove* incontestibly, that—whatever may be our other claims to the distinction—we have not the shadow of a pretension to be considered “the first nation of Europe” in respect to the condition, organization, or management of our literary and scientific establishments†. It follows, then, that public attention cannot be called to such documents as these without some advantage. If the present Letter should conduce to this desirable end, in however small a degree, its object will have been attained.

The author of a little pamphlet recently published‡ asks, “What *is* the use of the British Museum?” I do not know that this apparently very simple question has received any answer; but in the Minutes of Evidence I find a question of a somewhat analogous character, viz. “What are the *objects* of the British Museum?”—in other words, what *ought to be* its use? —to which the following answers are given by some of the officers; beginning with Sir Henry Ellis, the principal librarian. The opinion of this gentleman must be arrived at somewhat circuitously, the question not having been put to him so directly as to the others.

* Not yet completed.

† The proof will probably be said—and with but too much justice—to be that of a truism. The opinion of Sir Humphry Davy we have seen already. Another authority, not likely to be suspected of *partiality* to foreign establishments, or to innovation of any sort, says, in 1830, “of all the kingdoms of Europe, France is undoubtedly the one in which the scientific establishments have been regulated by the most enlightened and liberal principles, and in which science is most successfully cultivated.”—*Quarterly Review*, vol. xliii, p. 316.

‡ “Remarks on the present State of the British Museum, &c., by H. S. Peacock, Surgeon.” London, 1835.

The chief object of this pamphlet, is to propound a system of classification for the scientific objects in the Museum; and it seems intended rather for the scientific or professional, than for the general reader.

In reply to a question, as to the expediency of opening the Museum during public holidays, such as the weeks of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide respectively, Sir Henry Ellis says,

[1320.] I think that the most mischievous part of the population is abroad and about at such a time. [The Examination proceeds, 1321.] Do you think that any mischief would arise to the Museum, provided sufficient attendants were present?—Yes; I think the more vulgar class would crowd into the Museum.

Mr. Samouelle, Assistant in the Department of Natural History, bears the following testimony to the general behaviour of the public at the Museum, and to the importance of opening the Collection on public holidays.

[3916.] You mean to say, that the behaviour of the public, generally, is such as it ought to be in viewing the Museum?—Yes; the ignorant are brought into awe by what they see about them, and the better-informed know, of course, how to conduct themselves. We have common policemen, soldiers, sailors, artillerymen, livery servants, and, of course, occasionally mechanics; but their good conduct I am very much pleased to see; and I think that the exhibition at the Museum will have a vast influence on the national character of Englishmen in general.

* * * * *

[3923.] Then, drunken persons being excluded, and some additional strictness being observed in watching the collections, the opening the Museum on those holidays would be perfectly safe?—Yes; there are a number of persons in situations in the City of London, who have, from the regulations of the establishments, no other holiday than the Easter, Christmas, and Whitsun vacations, when the London bankers and large companies do no business, and where numerous respectable persons are employed; and many, from that circumstance, have not been able to see the British Museum.

To return to the examination of Sir H. Ellis:—

[1322.] Do you not think that one object of the Museum is to improve the vulgar class?—I think the mere gazing at our curiosities is not one of the greatest objects of the Museum.

* * * * *

The necessity of thoroughly cleansing the Museum is asserted as a strong reason for closing it during the holidays abovementioned.

[1327.] Would it not be desirable, with reference to the great mass of the people, that that cleansing should take place at some other period of the year, and that the Museum should be open during the great public holidays?—I think the inconvenience, generally speaking, is less on those great public holidays than it would be at any other time.

[1328.] Are not more people about, whom you should be anxious to instruct and amuse during these holidays, than at any other portion of the year?—I think the more important class of the population (as far as we are concerned) would be discontented at such a change as the former question contemplates.

[1329.] Will you describe what you mean by the more important class of the population?—People of a higher grade would hardly wish to come at the same time with sailors from the dock-yards and girls whom they might bring with them. I do not think such people would gain any improvement from the sight of our collections.

[1330.] Did you ever know an instance of a sailor bringing a girl from the dock-yards?—I never traced them to the dock yards, but the people who would come at such times would be of a very low description.

Allusion is made to the opening of the Louvre on fête days; and Sir Henry states, that there a strict police is stationed; he is asked—

[1335.] Then, do you mean to say, that if you had a more strict police your objections to opening the Museum on great public holidays would be at an end?—I have never considered the admission of the public to the Museum in that point of view.

The Rev. Mr. Forshall, Secretary of the Museum and Keeper of the MSS., says,

[612.] I have always looked upon the Museum as the great national store-house of literature, arts, and science; and that its chief object is, to assist persons engaged in any of these pursuits; but it is also important as a place of innocent and instructive amusement for the population of the metropolis; and I think it confers some other not inconsiderable benefits upon the public.

Mr. König, Keeper of the Department of Natural History, is asked—

[2908.] Do you not think that a national collection ought rather to induce and stimulate inquiry than to furnish information to those who are already learned? He replies,—Certainly, it may be considered the chief object, in forming these collections, to stimulate the exertions of the unlearned; but whether or not the British Museum has that effect, I cannot say.

Mr. J. E. Gray, Extra-assistant in the Natural History Department.—

[3322.] State what you conceive the objects of the Institution to be?—To encourage a taste for science among the people generally, and to advance it among those who are more especially to be regarded as men of science and students; not by giving facilities to one set of students in particular, but to open the collection to all who are desirous of studying it, and capable of

profiting by it. There is also, in my estimation, another object, viz. to supply a collection of standard authority, as complete as possible, which may serve as a model and a guide to all the other institutions of the country. For this purpose it ought to be kept, in point of arrangement and nomenclature, on a level with the constantly progressing state of science.

Minutes of Evidence, p. 237.

It is worthy of observation, that in this instance, precisely as we descend the scale of official authority, we appear to find a more catholic perception of the objects of the Museum. A dread of the inroads of “the vulgar class” [meaning, apparently, the manual-labour classes in general] does not seem to dwell in any breast of less dignity than that of a principal librarian. We descend a step: the Secretary and Keeper of the MSS. thinks the Museum a place of “innocent and instructive *amusement*” for such persons. Another,—and we find we have made a stride indeed—the Keeper of the Department of Natural History considers that really *the chief object* of the Museum is *to stimulate the exertions of the unlearned*,—a description necessarily including the mass of those of whose incursions the principal librarian expressed so devout a horror.

Perhaps a future examination into the constitution of the Museum *government* will help to solve this enigma, as well as another,—viz. why Mr. König is *unable to say* “whether or not the British Museum *has* that effect?” *i. e.* the effect of “stimulating the exertions of the unlearned;” assuredly, if it have not, the fault does not lie with the present *officers*. Every one who has been in the habit of frequenting the Museum must bear witness to their perfect urbanity and readiness to afford all the information in their power *compatibly with existing regulations and circumstances*. Whatever, then, may be the faults of the Museum, we must, in general, look beyond the officers for their causes: we must remember that we have to do with the only national Museum in Europe in which the acting officers have no share in the management. This, however, is a question not to be entered upon now.

I shall not enter into any long argument to prove that the object thus asserted by Mr. König ought, indeed, to be the *chief object* of a national Museum. I shall content myself with placing it

in one of the many points of view in which it might be regarded. Suppose we were, for a moment, to keep out of view the ultimate end of all science in reference to the improvement of all mankind, and were to regard its pursuit solely as the means of exercising the extraordinary powers of a few gifted individuals for their own benefit. Should we not be forced to admit, that this end would be most effectually attained by interesting the many in the pursuits of the few? If this be true, is it not idle to talk of the *intention* of a public library or museum being to afford "not a library of education, but a library of research*" [1288.]—to assist the labours of the learned rather than the education of the ignorant? the sole question being, in truth, just that which is thus avoided, viz. whether or not a national museum or library *can* educate the ignorant more directly than by assisting the labours of the learned. *If it can*, its path is before it, and however extensively it may become the means of *diffusing* knowledge, it can never be the less able to help those who aim at *extending* knowledge.

At present the chief practical bearing of this question is upon the accessibility of the collections of antiquities and those of natural history; it will, therefore, be proper to examine it more particularly when I come to speak of the evidence respecting those collections: in this place, however, I will beg to recall to your recollection, the evidence of Dr. G. F. Waagen†, of James Crabb‡, of Mr. Skene§, of Mr. Cockerell||; of Mr. Toplis, and others before the Select Committee of last session, on Arts and Manufactures, of which committee you were a member, as shew-

* Differing, as I do, so widely from the opinion of the principal librarian in particular, as to the proper *objects and aims* of the Museum, I yet wish it to be understood, that I impeach rather his theory, and the effects of that theory upon the *regulations* of the Museum, than his own practice; and here I repeat, once for all, that, in my belief, founded on my own observation as a frequent visiter of the Museum, the officers and attendants in general do as much to make the Museum useful as the present *regulations and system of government* permit of.

† Report on Arts and Manufactures, 81, 92.

§ Ibid, 1192, 1197.

|| 1451, 1458.

‡ Ibid, 1065, 1091.

ing the vital importance to our manufactures of making such collections, and especially collections of works of fine art, of botany, and of mineralogy, more extensively accessible ; and as proving, incontestibly, that the present superiority of other countries in certain valuable branches of fancy manufacture is, in great measure, to be ascribed to their possession of far superior means in National Museums, &c. of cultivating the taste of *their artisans*, and of the people at large*. And this, be it remembered, is putting the question on the lowest basis. It is an argument entirely independent of that arising from the *moral* good of such institutions and of such cultivation.

* I quote a portion of the second of the testimonies enumerated above, that of James Crabb, House Decorator, "residing at No. 8, Shoe Lane, Fleet Street." [922.] You do not find the journeymen are sufficiently instructed to produce works such as those the journeymen of France produce?—Decidedly ; in the instance of the French paper produced, the printing of it requires a certain degree of taste and knowledge in the actual application of the colours ; and if we had the same blocks, I do not expect there would be found, at present, in the English journeymen sufficient intelligence to print or produce the whole design equal to the French specimen.

* * * * *

[1014.] Did you ever obtain any assistance, by means of casts, from the better specimens of sculpture in the Museum or elsewhere?—I should derive assistance from them if I had the opportunity, but I have not time.

[1015.] It would be a matter of some importance to you, and to those connected with the art of designing, could they obtain casts of the finer statues and bas-reliefs?—Yes, in many cases.

* * * * *

[1081.] Would it be a great advantage to you to have the means of studying the drawing of birds from nature itself in the Museum, &c.?—Yes, it would ; and it would be still an increased advantage if we were allowed access to it early in the day : I can avail myself of no advantage unless it is before breakfast.

[1082.] Now, with regard to the British Museum, supposing you could have access in the summer from six to eight, in order to design from any of the statues or friezes there, would or not that be a great advantage to you in your trade?—It would ; it might be a *very* great advantage.

[1088.] You are so engaged throughout the day, that it would be an essential benefit to you to visit these galleries and places or public institutions in the morning and evening?—Yes; morning or evening."

Arts Report, 1835, pp. 70, 71, 72, 76.

I proceed to review—necessarily in a very brief and imperfect manner—the leading features as to condition and management of each of the four present departments of the Museum, as they are exhibited in the Minutes of Evidence ; thence ascending to its general constitution and government.

First—OF THE LIBRARY.

This comprehends both the department of MSS. and that of printed books. I shall arrange my observations under the following heads :—I. Accessibility ; II. Supply of Books ; III. State of Catalogues ; and, IV. Departmental Organization.

I.—OF ACCESSIBILITY.

The reading room of the Museum is at present open only from ten o'clock A.M. until four P.M. throughout the year. The vacations are about four weeks (viz. during the Christmas, Easter, and Whitsun weeks respectively, and on several fast and thanksgiving days). The grievance complained of is, that persons engaged in important professional or commercial pursuits are virtually excluded from the use of the Museum library, in consequence of the six hours during which it is open being the busiest six hours of the day.

Mr. Forshall, the Secretary, is asked—

[1287.] Would there be any objection to opening the Museum in the evening ?—I think there are great objections.

[1288.] Will you state what those objections are ?—I conceive that the library of the Museum is at present sufficiently open for the purposes for which it is designed. It is not intended to be a library of education, but a library of research ; and its use must be confined, or ought to be confined, chiefly to persons of literary or scientific pursuits, who have some serious object in view in coming to consult its collections.

[1289.]—Are you not aware that, by closing the reading room in the evening, you virtually close it to a number of gentlemen who are occupied in business during the morning ?—I am perfectly aware of that ; but I do not think such persons would be debarred from coming to the Museum whenever they had a really serious and important object. If it were a library of education, I should agree with what I presume to be the notion in the question now put to me.

Again I ask, where is Mr. Forshall's *authority* for stating that the Library of the British Museum was *not intended to be a library of education*?

After an allusion to the late Mr. Roscoe, of Liverpool, as "a gentleman known to have been engaged in business, yet to have undertaken and completed various important literary works," [1290] and an admission that he would "undoubtedly have found many more opportunities to have consulted it, if the library had been open to him during those hours when he was not necessarily engaged in business," [1291]—the examination proceeds :

[1292.]—Do you not think there are many such persons, lawyers for instance, in London?—I think there may be many who desire, with a view to their own greater accommodation, to see the Museum open in the evening; but I do not think that the convenience which would result from such an alteration of the arrangements can be fairly balanced against the inconveniences.

[1293.] What are the inconveniences?—The inconveniences are, first, that we must have an extended establishment.

[1294.] To what amount?—It is very difficult for me to say to what amount, for that would depend on how long the reading room was kept open, and during what period of the year it was kept open. Through the depth of winter it is at present open during almost the whole hours of daylight, and it would be utterly out of the question to keep it open after daylight.

[1295.] Why?—Because it is a library of such immense value, so utterly irreparable if it were lost, that you ought to protect such a library against all the risks that you can; and there would, I conceive, be great risk of accident from the introduction of candles, or other artificial light.

This last, then, is the only inconvenience or difficulty which is tangible; for how "an extended establishment," in order to meet increasing demands, should be an *inconvenience* to a well-conducted national Museum, is not very intelligible. But the risk of fire is a serious objection indeed. How is it to be obviated? It is proposed to build a fire-proof room, separate from the library rooms, to be used solely as an evening reading room, under certain regulations.

[1300.] Supposing there were a regulation of this kind,—that if a person has required a book to be delivered to him in the evening, it should be deposited in the reading room during the daytime, and the room in which the persons actually read should be open till a certain hour of the night; would not that obviate the difficulty of carrying lights into the rooms in

which the books are actually deposited?—To a certain extent it would ; but that plan would involve much more trouble than you are at present aware of. Suppose you give notice the morning before that you want a book in the evening; that book might possibly be wanted by half a dozen other persons in the interim, and a good deal of trouble must, in that case, be incurred in providing the book. But this is a trifle ; I do not mean to dwell upon the objection ; because it is, after all, little more than one of expense.

Truly, this objection *is* a trifle ; setting aside the improbability of such a case occurring at all, if it did occur, it would only shew the necessity of having duplicates of books in such extreme request ; and in no case would it be necessary to put aside the books for an entire day : it would be sufficient to remove them *during daylight*. So far, then, it is clear that the question of extending the utility of the British Museum library by rendering it accessible in the evening, not only in summer (as was the practice formerly*), but in winter also, by means of the especial appropriation of a fire-proof room for the purpose, *is merely a question of expense*, and of nothing more.

What says Sir Henry Ellis to it ?—

[1313.] The truth is, that men of research are glad to come to our house the moment they have finished their breakfasts ; and they work in the early part of the day ; they carry the materials home which they have gathered, and work them up for their publications in the evening. I believe the Committee will find that a different class of readers would come to the Museum in the evening ; a class of persons for whom it would hardly be necessary to provide such a library as that of the British Museum ; they would be lawyers' clerks, and persons who would read *voyages* and *travels*, novels, and light literature ; a class, I conceive, the Museum library was not intended for, at least not for their principal accommodation.

[1314.] A merchant's or lawyer's clerk might have a literary taste?—Yes ; but the main purpose of a national library is to assist research, to aid those who are more professionally devoted to knowledge. Circulating libraries provide most of the books which merchants' clerks would want.

It would be curious to know who Sir Henry Ellis intends to comprehend under his pet phrase “men of research.” Does he mean gentlemen who write dissertations in the *Archæologia*? The sneer about merchants' clerks is quite unworthy of the chief officer of a national museum. Did Sir Henry Ellis ever ask himself, whether a merchant's clerk would be the worse for

* See Minutes of Evidence, p. 98.

turning his attention to works of a higher class than “voyages and travels, novels, and light literature”? But, perhaps, these are little ebullitions of impatience under “cross-examination” which must not be scrutinized too closely.

This is all the evidence of any importance on the alteration of the reading-room hours. I think I am clearly borne out by it in repeating, that the sole difficulty attending the proposed change, is that of EXPENSE, which it rests with Parliament to surmount: and surely in this, as in all similar questions, utility ought to be the measure of expense, not expense that of utility.

The utility in this case is unquestionable. It is not merely, that those who under the present regulations *are* able to avail themselves, more or less, of the Museum library may have its facilities extended, and be enabled to devote to their labours eight, ten, or twelve hours, if they please, instead of six or four, or even two only, as is now the case with many; it is not merely to open the library to persons who, from the engrossing nature of their engagements of business, are at present utterly excluded from it; but it is also that the library may be made—notwithstanding what we have been told of its intention—a *direct agent*, in some degree, in the work of *national education*. Let not any one be alarmed lest something very “theoretical” or very revolutionary should be proposed. I merely suggest, that the library should be opened to a class of men quite shut out from it by the present regulations—I mean *schoolmasters*. Do I overrate the importance of this? If, for instance, our national history is to be taught with any other purpose than to keep up such existing prejudices as may still have a strong hold on the popular mind, or to maintain in authority existing narrations of past events, however strongly suspected of falsehood or convicted of inconsistency; unless, I say, *these* are the purposes for which history is to be taught in our schools, shall we exclude those who are to teach it, from the repositories of that documentary evidence by which alone error can be exposed, and truth elicited? At present *they are excluded*. On the subject of access to the Museum reading-rooms, in conclusion, I sub-

mit that some such regulations as the following are urgently required :—

1st. That they shall open at 8 o'clock, A. M. and close at 6, P. M. daily, during the months of April to August, both inclusive ; open at 9, A. M. and close at 5, P. M. during the months of February and March, September and October ; and for the remainder of the year open at 9, A. M. and close (as at present) at 4 P. M.

2d. That an additional reading-room should be constructed, fire-proof, separate from, but immediately contiguous to the present room ; to be properly lighted, warmed, and attended from 6 until 11 o'clock, P. M., daily throughout the year ; during which hours readers shall be furnished with such books as they may have previously requested by notice in writing to the proper officer [before — o'clock] in the morning of each day respectively.

II.—OF THE SUPPLY OF BOOKS.

This is a point to which the attention of the Committee has not yet been turned, the keeper of the printed book department not having been examined. The only mention I find of it in the "Minutes of Evidence" is at page 180, incidental to the examination respecting the classed catalogues.

My remarks and suggestions on this subject will relate—1st, to the state of the library in respect of recent continental literature ; 2dly, to the provisions of the statute 54 Geo. III, c. 156, for supplying the Museum with new British literature as published ; and, 3dly, to the disposition of duplicate books.

1. Of Recent Continental Literature.—Some idea of the exceedingly defective state of the library in this department may be formed from the following statements : they are selected at random, merely as *indications*, and are founded on an examination of the Catalogues in October last. It would be easy to multiply the examples :—

In German literature ; of the works of Jean von Muller—C. T. E. Hoffmann—Laun—Heine—Gellert—J. H. Voss—J. V. Voss—C. D. Voss—J. Voss, *none* ; of Goethe, none of later date than 1819 (save the *Correspondence* with Zelter);

of Herder, 5 or 6 volumes out of 40 (and they minor works, except the *Philosophie der Geschichte*) ; of Wieland, about the same proportion (viz. 7 vols. of the *Attisches Museum*, with some bad translations, 4 in English and 2 in French) ; of Kant, about 9 vols., chiefly translations and fragments ; of Schelling, 2 vols. ; of Fichte, 1 vol. ; of Jean Paul Richter, 1 vol.

In French literature (History) : of the works of Guizot *none* ; of Thierry, neither the *Histoire des Gaulois*, nor the *Histoire de la Revolution* ; of Villemain and De Barante, important works, missing ; of Armand Carrel, Des Michels, Du Rosoir, Matter, Poirson, *none* ; of Crevier's *Histoire des Empereurs*, only Mill's translation.

In Philosophy and Legislation : of the works of Cousin, only two volumes of ' *Fragmens*' , two American translations (*Elemens* and *Introduction*), and his *Rapport sur l'Instruction publique en La Prusse* ; of the works of Ch. Comte, Paul Louis Courier, Damiron, Degerando, *none*.

In the Belles Lettres : of the works of Chateaubriand are wanting the *Melanges*, *Opinions et Discours*, *Les Natchez*, *Les Martyres*, *Atala*, &c. ; of those of Ch. Nodier, the *Romans*, (10 vol.) the *Souvenirs*, *Reveries*, &c., and the *Questions de Litterature Legale* : The valuable work of Quérard, *La France Savante & Litteraire*, is wanting ; as are all the works of Victor Hugo, La Martine, Dumas, Ducange, Janin, Paul de Koch, &c. &c. Some of these last are merely novelists, it is true, but their works already form part of the literary history of France, and therefore, I think, ought not to be looked for in vain in the only national library of England. But leave these out, and the case is just as strong. The lists I have already given (and I have taken but a small portion of what lie before me) prove a very gross neglect of foreign literature. I will give one other example : on comparing (also in October last) a list of the works published on the Continent between January and April 1832, in the several classes of History, Biography, Voyages and Travels, and Fine Arts, with the catalogues of the Museum, I found, that out of fifty-three, the total number, four only were in the Museum. In this list were some of the most valuable

works in those departments the age has produced such as those of Sismondi, Savigny, Caillaud, Moller, &c. &c.

Yet Sir Henry Ellis says, in the passage I have already alluded to, "the Museum library is not decidedly poor in any class." [2459.]

How are these deficiencies to be supplied?

I submit, first, that they must be *accurately estimated*; and this can only be done by completing, as quickly as possible, the classed catalogue, to which I shall have to advert presently.

Secondly: that arrangements should be made with the chief countries of continental Europe for a *regular* mutual interchange (or, where interchange should, for any reason, be found impracticable, for a regular *purchase*) of all valuable new works. This arrangement should, I conceive, be effected, not by imposing a tax on literature at home, but by purchase at the national expense. In this respect the Aberdeen University Bill of 1833 was highly objectionable*.

Thirdly: that, *ad interim*, a specific sum should be set apart, in order to supply the Museum with the more important foreign works as they are published, and more especially to supply, immediately, the most important of the existing deficiencies; which sum should not be devoted to *any other* purposes, as has been but too frequently the case formerly. (See Evidence 1000 et seq. 1180 et seq.)

2. Of the supply of new works published in Great Britain.—The fundamental objection to the present mode of supplying these by a compulsory delivery under the provisions of the copyright act, is, that it imposes a *partial* tax for a national object.

It is not true, indeed, that the tax in all cases falls *wholly* upon authors or upon booksellers, but partly on these, by in-

* Introduced by Lord John Russell, with a view to the interchange with France of a copy of every new book published in either country, this bill seemed very likely to prejudice a still pending question, by proposing to effect that interchange through the purchase from the University of Aberdeen, of its right, under the 54th Geo. 3, to a gratuitous copy of every book published in Great Britain. The University was to have had £460 a-year, and the copies were to have been sent to France.

creasing outlay and risk, and diminishing sale; and partly on the purchasers of books, by augmentation of price; still, it *is* a partial tax, since it falls on authors, booksellers, and purchasers of books exclusively, *when the book succeeds, and on these unequally;* and on the author or bookseller (most commonly, doubtless, on the first), or both together, exclusively, *when the book fails.*

That it is of national importance there should be public libraries, wherein a copy of every published book may be found, will hardly be denied. The cost, then, of attaining that object should be defrayed from national funds.

The present law is open to another objection, in respect of the appropriation of the copies. The eleven libraries which possess the right have now very unequal claims to be considered of public utility: some of them are closed to the public; others do not preserve the books they receive, but sell them*; while others are, at least (as we have seen in the case of the Aberdeen University), *ready* to sell them, if they can find a purchaser. Surely, these alone would be sufficient reasons for re-considering the law.

But again: The present law does not even attain its primary object. I do not mean as "*an act for the encouragement of learning.*" Whether or not the same enactment, under the 8th Anne, had the effect of encouraging learning (which I very much doubt), it appears certain that, under present circumstances, it actively *discourages* learning, by putting an onerous tax on authorship, *without attaching any compensating benefit*†, and that it is now, in fact, a drag on the power of the press, just as it was intended to be on its first legislative appearance

* One of the modifications desired by the booksellers in 1813 is, that the libraries be compelled "to preserve what they demand, and neither sell, waste, nor give them away."—*Report of the Select Committee on Copyright, 1813* (Sess. Pp. vol. 4), p. 32.

† Even the British Museum library, while it continues to be so ill supplied with foreign literature, can offer little compensation to the author who may be within its reach. That the greater part of the *other* libraries offer no sort of compensation at all to authors in general, it must be superfluous to observe.

under the 14th Car. 2.* But with this argument I have, at present, nothing to do.

I mean, that its primary object as *an enactment to furnish certain public libraries with copies of all published books*, within certain periods, is not attained; at least, is not in the case of the British Museum.

The act directs the publisher to deliver the copies to the warehouse-keeper of the Stationers' Company *within one month of demand*, and the said keeper to deliver to the libraries *within one month of receipt* (sec. 2); and further directs the titles of all books to be entered within one month of publication (sec. 5); which list the warehouse-keeper is to transmit to the libraries (sec. 6). The Copyright Committee of 1818, however, thus describes this act in relation to the British Museum:—"In 1814, the last act on this subject was passed, which directed the indiscriminate delivery of one large paper copy of every book which should be printed, *at the time of its entry* at Stationers' Hall, to the BRITISH MUSEUM, but limited the claim of the other ten libraries to such books as they should demand," &c.†

The practice is very different from this: the number of works *not delivered at all* is considerable, and the delivery of such as are is exceedingly irregular; the obligation being generally regarded by those on whom it rests as a vexatious and burthen-some impost, is, as might be expected, evaded whenever opportunity occurs‡, whether by lapse of time or otherwise; and these

* To this point the law is generally traced back; but I have not seen it noticed, that before this time it was a decree of the Star Chamber. (*Records*, July 11, 1637). It is generally agreed, that it took its rise in England from a private agreement of Sir Thomas Bodley with the Stationers' Company, in 1610. *MS. Harl. cod. 852*; *Reliquiae Bodleianæ*, pp. 272, 313. As a matter of history, there are some very curious details connected with this enactment; and as a matter of law, it ought certainly to be pressed on the immediate attention of the legislature. If no more practised and abler pen assume the task, the writer may be inclined to attempt its discussion in connexion with the question of copyright.

† *Report*, 1818 (Sess. Pp. vol. 9), p. 4.

‡ The unsuccessful prosecution of the *Flora Graeca* case seems to have cost about £600, judging by the law expenses for the year 1828 (*Appendix*

opportunities appear to be by no means infrequent. By a comparison of a list of the books published in London* between January and July 1835, with the Museum catalogues, it appeared that under the letters *A, B, and C only*, there were *forty-seven* works published (during those six months ending July 8) not in the library *on the 2d October*. Yet these had been due, *on an average*, from three to four months, putting the Museum on the same footing as the other libraries, but due for a much longer period, if we are to take the interpretation of the Copyright Committee†.

Without pursuing this subject farther, which would ill consort with the due limits of a letter—limits, indeed, already trespassed upon—I think I may venture to assert, that the present method of supplying the library of the British Museum (among others) with the current literature of the day, demands careful and *immediate* inquiry; because, first, it is the opinion of many high authorities, that it tends to the “*discouragement of learning,*” in opposition to its professed intention; secondly, because, for an object obviously national, it imposes an unnecessarily partial tax; and because, thirdly, it is not effectively enforced.

Some of the modes in which, it is thought, the object might be better attained are mentioned *as suggestions* in the appended “*Heads of Inquiry*‡.”

3. Of the disposition of duplicate books.—By an account in the Appendix, No. 3 (*Report*, p. 369), the following appears to be “the No. of vols. of printed books sold or otherwise disposed of from the library of the British Museum between the years 1820 and 1833:”—

to Report, p. 335). The judgment decided, that a part of a work to which there were twenty subscribers, and of which only thirty copies were printed, published at intervals of several years, at an expense exceeding the sum to be obtained by the price of the copies, and which expense was defrayed by a testamentary donation, was not a book demandable under the act. The cause was tried in the Exchequer Chamber, and is reported in the fourth vol. of Bingham’s Reports, p. 540.

* Lists published by Bent.

† With regard to this interpretation, however, I must confess I do not clearly see on what it is founded.

‡ Appendix, No. 1.

1830. 2072 duplicate volumes, transferred to the library of the
 — Royal Society in exchange for
 the Arundel collection of MSS.
1831. 5639 ditto . . } Sold by public auction.
1832. 6699 ditto . . }

12,338, which produced £2043..17s..0d. [Evidence, 528.]

Now, would it not be much better to give all duplicates not likely to be useful to the Museum itself, either in aid of the formation of *permanent provincial libraries*, or in aid of the libraries of such existing institutions as may give the best security for their due appropriation and conservation ; reserving to the Museum a right of inspection* ?

III.—CATALOGUES.

I come now to what is really the *most* important topic—as far as the library of the Museum is concerned—the state of its catalogues. “As are the catalogues of a library, so will be its utility,” is as true a maxim as that of the German educationists, “as is the master, so will be the school†.” “What good is the use of a library of more than 200,000 volumes,” writes Heeren in his excellent life of that model of a public librarian, Christian Gottlob Heyne, “if one knows not what it contains, or knows not where that which it does contain is to be found‡?” The importance, then, of this matter must excuse rather long extracts in regard to it. The first point is, to shew, from the evidence, the *present state* of the catalogues.

[*To Mr. Forshall.* 744.] What printed catalogues (of MSS.) have you with indexes?—The catalogues of the Royal Collection, of the Harleian, Cottonian, Sloane, Lansdowne, and Hargrave Collections.

* See “Heads of Inquiry,” Appendix, p. 50.

† Cousin’s Report on Prussian Education.

‡ “Was hülfe eine Bibliothek von mehr als 200,000 bänder, wenn man nicht wusste was man hätte, wenn man nicht wusste, wo das was man hat, zu finden sey?”—C.G. Heyne’s Biographisch dargestellt, von A. H. L. Heeren, Gött. 1812. As I know of no translation of this little work, I cannot refrain from quoting, in the Appendix to this Letter, a passage or two especially valuable, as containing an account of the admirable system of catalogues established by Heyne at Göttingen.

[745.] What printed catalogues without indexes?—The catalogue of the Arundel MSS., printed last year.

[746.] What manuscript catalogues with indexes?—There are none except a brief catalogue of the Burney MSS., and one of the charters.

[747.] What manuscript catalogues without indexes?—A partial catalogue of the “additional MSS.” and one of the MSS. of George III library.
[Qy.: are there not others, of “additional charters,” Mitchell papers, &c.?]

[748.] Have there been, or are there now, manuscript catalogues in the reading-room without indexes?—Yes.

[749.] How many volumes are there of that description?—I can hardly tell you how many volumes they fill; but the MSS. described in the catalogues without indexes [see 747], or which are not described at all, extend from No. 4,100 to about 9,800, so that you may consider them as forming between 5,000 and 6,000 volumes.

[750.] Then, supposing it to be required to search for the name of any particular place or person, for the purpose of discovering whether there are any documents relating to the object of search among the 22,500 volumes of MSS. in the Museum, how many indexes would it be necessary to refer to, and how many volumes to peruse?—That depends upon circumstances; but it might possibly be sometimes necessary to refer to most of the indexes I have mentioned.

This answer,—like many others, unfortunately,—answers only *a part* of the question. Suppose a person wishes to know what the whole of the collections of MSS. in the Museum contain relative to any particular subject or individual: he has, first, to examine six indexes to printed catalogues [744], and two to manuscript catalogues [746]; and, secondly, to peruse entirely one printed catalogue, and about twenty-five volumes of manuscript catalogues; but when this labour is performed, he must still remain ignorant of what the collections *not catalogued at all* contain upon his subject, or else undertake the additional labour of perusing, I think, about 4000* volumes of MSS. throughout.

* I have found some difficulty in ascertaining *precisely* the number of vols. of MSS. which remain uncatalogued. We have seen by the evidence of Mr. Forshall [749, quoted in the text], that the number catalogued *without indexes, and not catalogued at all* is about 5,700. The two catalogues of “additional MSS.” without indexes, in the reading room (in 17 volumes folio) extend from 5018 to 6803, or little more than one-third of that number. It is, therefore, probable that, with recent additions, the number is not less than 4,000.

How often this labour is really undertaken, I know not; but I do know that the information is wanted almost daily.

The catalogues of the printed books are chiefly in two series; first, the printed catalogue of 1812, with MS. enlargements (now far exceeding the original in bulk) in 22 vols. folio; and, secondly, the catalogue of the Library of George III, in 5 vols. imperial folio, with an addendum; *both alphabetical: there is no general classed catalogue**.—[1685—*Sir Henry Ellis.*]]

The examination proceeds with reference to the comparative utility and importance of classed and alphabetical catalogues.

[1690.] Then, to ascertain what works you have on a particular subject, a classed catalogue is considered indispensable?—I do not know that a classed catalogue is indispensable; an alphabetical one is; an alphabetical one is referred to five hundred times where a classed catalogue is referred to once.

[1691.] And where an alphabetical one does not give the information required, as it cannot do by not shewing all the works in the library on a particular subject, the classed catalogue is referred to?—Yes; that which is in [and is only a catalogue of] the king's library.

[1692.] But if it is useful in the king's library, it would be useful in any other?—Certainly.

[1693.] Will you favour the Committee with your opinion of the comparative value of an alphabetical catalogue and a classed catalogue?—An alphabetical catalogue is indispensable; a classed catalogue is only occasionally useful. The men who come to our reading-room are mostly men of laborious research, and men who are well acquainted with the subjects they are reading or writing upon; and, therefore, a classed catalogue is not so often asked for as you might imagine. I do not mean to deny the utility of a classed catalogue; but I think the making of a perfect alphabetical one ought to be a prior employment; and the completion of a perfect alphabetical one is the most important of the two to effect.

* * * *

[1697.] Will you state to the Committee, having now given your opinion

* Of the King's Library (that of George III, mentioned above) there is a classed catalogue in manuscript, made by Sir Frederick Barnard, at Buckingham House; *but this is not in the reading-room*. The existence of this catalogue was unknown to the writer, notwithstanding he had very frequently complained of the great want of a classed catalogue in the reading-room, until he chanced the other day to see it mentioned in the Report of the Parliamentary Committee of 1823 (S. P. vol. 4). In what Sir Henry Ellis says of the frequent use of this catalogue [1685-9] he must certainly be under a mistake, as far as the reading-room is concerned.

that it is very desirable there should be such a catalogue, why it was discontinued?—The trustees have discontinued it for a time, until they can get a good alphabetical catalogue completed.

[1698.] Why should they not be going on simultaneously?—The labour is immense, and the expense would be very great, to be carrying on both catalogues in full force at the same time.

Surely, was never a simple question more marvellously mystified than this, of the comparative importance of classed and alphabetical catalogues to a public library. A good classed catalogue always *includes* an alphabetical catalogue in the shape of an “index of authors’ names,” *i. e.* precisely the very thing, for all purposes of alphabetical reference, in order to obtain which, according to Sir Henry Ellis, the classed catalogue was abandoned. *Mr. Horne’s plan did include this.* The argument, then, is utterly fallacious, even upon Sir Henry’s own premises—that alphabetical reference is more required,—is more generally useful, than scientific reference.

But are these premises true?

An alphabetical catalogue, arranged, as are the catalogues of the British Museum, according to authors’ names, can only be useful to the reader who knows the name of the author whose book he wishes to consult, and who also requires to consult *but one work* on a given subject. If he do not know the author’s name, and attempt to find the book he is in quest of by its title, he will *commonly* have to search in three or four places; *in the Museum catalogues* he will *frequently* have to search half a dozen or even a dozen places, before he can be certain whether or not the book be there. If, again, knowing the authors’ names, he require *several works*; in an alphabetical catalogue he must refer to several volumes,—in a classed catalogue he need refer but to one.

On the other hand, to the reader who wishes to *study* a subject, a classed catalogue is vitally important; for his object is to know what has been written on that subject.

Is he a “man of laborious research?” So much the more important is it that his time be not thrown away. But, says Sir Henry Ellis, he is then “*well acquainted*” with the writers on his subject. How did he acquire that knowledge—by the books

themselves? or by a catalogue of them? If by the former, what has he to do at the Museum? If by the latter, what becomes of Sir Henry's argument?

*I know I speak the sentiments of a great number of the constant frequenters of the Museum, when I say that a classed catalogue is, beyond comparison, more useful than an alphabetical one. If this be not so, will Sir Henry Ellis explain why Watts's "Bibliotheca Britannica" is so constantly in request among readers, in order to make out lists of books on a given subject to be afterwards looked out, one by one, from thirty volumes of alphabetical catalogue? Will he state why the officers themselves use that work for the same purpose?**

The examination proceeds, as to expense:

[1774.] Could you make any rough guess as to the expense of a classed catalogue?—No; I could not make any approximation to the expense: such a catalogue of our library would cost many thousands of pounds.

We shall see that it *has* already cost "many thousands of pounds," without a single page of catalogue to shew for it.

The following sums have been paid by parliamentary grants as "expenditure on account of classed catalogue," viz.

1826....	£515	18s.	0d.
1827....	875	19	8
1828....	1029	6	8
1829....	1041	6	8
1830....	793	6	8
1831....	360	0	0
1832....	360	0	0
1833....	360	0	0

Total £5355 17 8 for classed catalogue†.

* There are some good remarks on the importance of classed catalogues to a library, in the 'Introductory Preface' to the Catalogue of the admirably selected Library of the London Institution, vol. 1, recently published. That catalogue, which has been very judiciously compiled, comprehends,—1st, A synoptical table of the classes; 2dly, A plan of the arrangement in classes, *of the books themselves*; 3dly, A general classed catalogue of all the books; 4thly, An index of authors' names and works; 5thly, An Index of anonymous works, and "*of the many different subjects of which some account is to be found in the library.*"

† The plan on which this catalogue was commenced is contained in 'Outlines for the Classification of a Library,' submitted to the Trustees of

Notwithstanding this expenditure, not a single faculty, or portion of a faculty, of this catalogue, not a single MS. page, has been placed in the reading-room for the *pro tempore* accommodation of the readers. But instead of this, the collected materials have been broken up, for the purpose of reprinting the alphabetical catalogue!

To Sir H. Ellis—[1702.] Do you mean to say, that the materials are in the same state in which they were when the formation of the classed catalogue was given up?—I do not know that the materials are in precisely the same state, because I believe that many of those materials are at present used in making the alphabetical catalogues; but they are so marked as to allow of their being restored for the purpose of the classed catalogue, when the work is done for which they are at present used.

Apparently with a view to help Sir Henry Ellis out of some difficulty, some apparent contradiction, into which the mysterious nature of the subject had led him, the following astute question is put to him:—

[1775.] From the rapid increase in the number of works that are published, would a catalogue made this year be very available a few years hence? —No; it is like a law book*; it would grow obsolete in a short space of time, and would constantly need re-printing to keep it up as a record of knowledge. Librarians are living catalogues, and can usually be consulted to greater advantage for a continuance.

Sir Henry had, a little before, been observing (p. 129), that there was little or no need of communication between readers and librarians in the Museum reading-room, and that, therefore, it was by no means expedient to revise the former excellent regulation, that *one of the librarians* should be *constantly* present.

{1776.] The advantage which would be derived by persons who consult the library from a classed catalogue is very much provided for by the presence of the librarian?—It is. If he performs his duty, he is sure to be acquainted with the wealth or poverty of the library; with its strength or weakness in the different classes of knowledge.

But Sir Henry Ellis is himself an example of a principal librarian not being able to remember *the number of volumes in the* the British Museum, by the Rev. T. H. Horne. Printed by the Trustees (not published), 1825.

* It is somewhat startling to hear that law books are remarkable for becoming “obsolete in a short space of time.” To look at most law libraries, one would hardly have guessed it. But do law books, therefore, cease to be printed?

library under his charge, even within 20,000, although that number had been officially returned to Parliament. How, then, could he be expected to serve as a classed catalogue of them?

[2419.] What is the extent of the library in the British Museum, and the number of volumes?—I believe the number is 240,000 volumes.

[2420.] Suppose the library at St. Petersburgh should consist of an equal number of volumes, and should possess an admirable classed catalogue, would it not shew that such a work was perfectly within the reach of the Trustees of the British Museum?—Decidedly so, within their reach; and so is the catalogue of any library that has been printed, if they choose to send for it; but I do not exactly see the drift of the question.

[2421.] Are you aware of the number of volumes in the Museum library stated in the return in the year 1833?—I am not.

[2422.] In the return of the year 1833, under the head Printed Books, the number of volumes is stated to be 218,957: will you inform the committee who made that return to the House of Commons?—Mr. Forshall, as Secretary, drew up the return as it was supplied to him from the respective departments; I presume, by the officers of those departments.

[2423.] Were you consulted at all on the subject?—I was consulted on those parts which related to the principal librarian, but every thing relating to the departments was contributed by those who had the appropriate care of the separate departments.

Besides this, we have found Sir Henry stating, that “the Museum library is not decidedly poor in any class,” and have tested the accuracy of that statement by recent continental literature. I will now add another and more direct test.

A comparison of the letters A, B, C in a list of works on Architecture, given in Stuart’s *Dictionary of Architecture* (Lond. 1826), with the Museum catalogue, has given the following result:—

In the catalogue of Stuart, under those three letters, were ninety-two works; of these there were at the Museum, according to the catalogue, only forty-seven.

* * * * *

[1777.] Did you ever know the case of a person wishing to have a classed catalogue who did not get the information he required from the librarian?—No; I never knew an instance*.

* The case has been that of the writer scores of times, and many a morning has been consumed to little purpose for the want of such catalogue. Librarians to be “living catalogues” must be *accessible*; whether, then, they would be generally found “classed” catalogues, may be matter of doubt.

[1778.] Is it not easier for the librarian to travel on with the accumulation of books, so as to know all that is to be found on the different subjects, than to go on correcting your classed catalogue with the rapidity you require to keep pace with the collection?—It is.

[1786.] If a classed catalogue is to be made at all, it should be done as quickly as possible by the same hands, in order that the same ideas should remain in the classification throughout?—Yes, that unity of design may be preserved.

[1787.] If you had the same hands, you would have the same ideas as to what heads the books should be classed under?—You would, if one person drew the original outline on which the others were to act.

[1788.] Then the question of expense would be the principal question to be considered?—Yes.

[1789.] And that would be more for Parliament to consider than the Trustees of the British Museum?—Certainly.

Here, then, we arrive at the same result as formerly with regard to the extension of the hours of the reading-room, i. e., that the question of completing a classed catalogue is one of *expense*, and of nothing else. The breaking up of the materials of the catalogue, after so large an expenditure, and without the slightest hint in Parliament of any disinclination to continue that expenditure so long as it might be necessary, is a proceeding which it is impossible to justify.

There is another point—much mixed up in the evidence with the question of catalogues—which deserves separate notice. I allude to the extraordinary want of acquaintance evinced on the part of the British Museum with the condition and proceedings of museums and libraries abroad.

Sir Henry Ellis is asked,—

[1764.] Do classed catalogues exist generally in foreign libraries?—I do not think they do. There is none at Paris, for instance, and that is a very large library; I mean none for the last half century. I do not know that I have seen a classed catalogue in any great foreign library. The foreign libraries have given up printing catalogues generally. Literature has accumulated so much, that a catalogue would find no purchaser if it was published.

One would have thought that a very good reason why catalogues should be printed, and why people should buy them. Surely, Sir Henry Ellis has an unconscionable notion of the duties and capabilities of “living classed catalogues.”

[2399.] You were asked, on a former occasion, whether classed catalogues

exist generally in foreign libraries, and your answer was, "I do not think they do; there is none in the Royal Library at Paris, for instance, and that is a very large library; I mean none for the last half century." Have you anything to add on that head?—Nothing that I recollect.

[2400.] Do you mean to say, that from your own knowledge there is no classed catalogue existing in any foreign library?—By no means; because I have not seen any very great number of foreign libraries; I have only seen the chief of those in France and Belgium.

[2401.] Then why did you say that you did not believe that classed catalogues exist in foreign libraries?—Because a good classed catalogue of any great foreign library would be sure to be known in an institution like the Museum.

[2402.] The question is not, whether any good classed catalogue exists in foreign libraries, but whether any classed catalogue exists, good or bad?—I have never seen any.

[2403.] Have you ever had your attention drawn to the Imperial Library at St. Petersburgh?—I have not.

[2404.] Do you know the extent of that library?—I do not; I have understood it is a very extensive library.

[2405.] In the return that was made to the House of Commons, and printed the 18th of May, 1835, it is there stated, that in the Imperial Library of St. Petersburgh there are three catalogues: le Catalogue Alphabetique des Livres, par ordre des Matières; le Catalogue Alphabetique des Auteurs, et le Catalogue Raisonné: are you acquainted at all with these catalogues?—Not at all; I never heard of them in print; I conclude they are in manuscript.

[2406.] Supposing such catalogues to exist, would they not be desirable works to have in the Museum?—If they are in print, it might be desirable for us to have them; but I do not conceive it would be desirable for us to have a transcript made of such manuscript catalogues.

[2407.] Supposing them to be in print, it would be desirable for the Museum to possess them?—Every book of that description is desirable for the Museum library.

[2408.] Have you or the trustees made any inquiry on the subject of classed catalogues in libraries abroad?—I am not aware that any inquiries of that kind have been made.

[2409.] Is that from your not thinking it of any importance?—No; by no means.

[2410.] Why then, when the subject of a classed catalogue has been so long under the consideration of the Trustees of the Museum, have you made no inquiries as to catalogues in libraries abroad?—I think there are people in this country quite as fit to class books as in any other country; I do not know why we should go to Russia to seek for such persons.

[2411.] You were not asked whether you should go to Russia to seek for

persons, but whether the Trustees, when the subject of a classed catalogue has been so long under their consideration, have made any inquiry as to classed catalogues in libraries abroad?—I do not know that they have made any inquiry, and there are very few libraries abroad which equal the Museum library in extent, and therefore the inquiry would limit itself. It would be the classed catalogue of a very large library only that would be important to us.

[2412.] Do you know the extent of the Imperial Library at St. Petersburgh?—I do not.

[2413.] Then how do you know there are no libraries abroad which equal the Museum library in extent, when of the large libraries abroad you know nothing?—I believe there are very few libraries abroad which equal that of the Museum. The library at Paris, the library at Vienna, and I suppose the library at Berlin, are large libraries; but we have little literary intercourse with Russia; at the same time I have reason to believe that the fruits of conquest have added very greatly of late to the Emperor's library at St. Petersburgh.

[2414.] Have you ever made yourself acquainted with the constitution of the Imperial Library at St. Petersburgh?—Not at all. I never made any inquiry upon that subject.

[2415.] Are you not aware that the libraries and scientific institutions abroad are chiefly conducted by literary and scientific men?—I really am not acquainted with the constitution of the libraries alluded to. In our own institution I am placed at the head of the whole general repository; and though called Principal Librarian, the library itself is not my peculiar department.

[2416.] I am not asking with reference to the details of each department, but considering you as chief officer of the Museum, I ask, whether you know the extent of the public library in Denmark, for instance?—No.

[2417.] In Vienna?—No. I never was at Vienna; but I know it is a great and an important library.

[2418.] At Paris?—I am very well acquainted with the library at Paris.

So far from it being true that “there are very few libraries abroad which equal the Museum library in extent,” there are at least nine which exceed it greatly—those of Berlin, Göttingen, Dresden, Naples, Vienna, Copenhagen, St. Petersburgh, Munich and Paris; and several others of about equal extent, as those of Wolfenbuttel (190,000*) ; Stuttgart (197,000†) ; Madrid (200,000 ‡), &c. The extent of the first nine, as nearly as I am able to ascertain it, is as follows:—

* Stein, ii, p. 363. † Appendix to Rep. 487.

‡ Appendix, p. 513. There are many provincial libraries in Spain. Fischer, in his “Picture of Valencia”, speaks of the library of the Archbishop at Va-

	Vols. of Printed Books in the Principal Library.	Vols. of MSS. in the Principal Library.	Population*.
Berlin	250,000 ⁽¹⁾	5,000	(248,816)
Göttingen	300,000†	5,000	(9,594)
Dresden	300,000‡	2,700	(69,000)
Naples	300,000§	6,000	(354,000)
Vienna	350,000	16,000	(320,000)
Copenhagen	400,000¶	20,000	(109,000)
St. Petersburgh	400,000**	16,000	(320,000)

lencia, containing 50,000 volumes, well selected, and *open to the public six hours a day*. "It contains," he says, "every Spanish publication that has appeared since 1763, and a great number of foreign works on history and geography."—*Picture of Valenciu*, translated by Shoberl, p. 13.

* The population of the German cities is taken from Stein's *Geographie und Statistik*; of the others, from the last edition of Malte-Brun. As the computations are, for the most part, founded on returns about 1821, the population of London is given in that year, from Marshall's Tables.

(¹) Rumpf, *Der Fremdenführer in Berlin, &c.* (1833), page 76.

† "Besides Dissertations." Stein, *Geographie und Statistik* (Leipzig, 1834), 2d bd. pp. 363, 545. Heeren's Life of Heyne.

‡ "Besides Dissertations 150,000," &c. Appendix to Report, p. 495.

§ Ibid, p. 490. Naples has several other public libraries.

|| Stein, ii, p. 363. Balbi, *Statistiques sur les Bibliothèques de Vienne*, 1835. The Count of Fortia-Piles speaks, in the year 1792, in very high terms of the state of this library, and of the prints and medals attached to it. There is, he says, "Une collection d'estampes superbe; elle contient plus de 700 gros volumes: dont 217 de portraits de tous les âges, et de tous les pays: c'est un recueil unique." Of the medals,—"Ce cabinet est encore plus remarquable par la collection de toutes les monnaies, qui est unique dans le monde, quoiqu'elle ne soit pas absolument complète."—*Voyage de deux Français* (Paris, 1796), tom. 4^{me}. pp. 135-144. Vienna has several other public libraries, containing together a number of volumes at least equal to that of the Imperial library.

¶ Copenhagen has two other public libraries—that of the University, containing 110,000 printed books and 3,000 vols. MSS., all collected since 1798, when the original library was destroyed by fire; and Classen's library, containing about 35,000 vols. These libraries, containing together 568,000 volumes, are open freely to every inhabitant, and the books are besides, under certain restrictions, allowed to circulate.—*Appendix to Report*, page 483.

** App. to Report, pp. 448-450. This library is the creation of but a few years. There was, indeed, a former library at St. Petersburg, but it was in a wretched condition. See what Christian Müller, who visited it in

	Vols. of Printed Books in the Principal Library.	Vols. of MSS. in the Principal Library.	Population.
Munich	500,000*	16,000	(95,718)
Paris†	700,000‡	80,000	(890,431)
London, British Museum	220,000	about 22,000	(1,528,301)

And this is *the only really public library* in England !

But, again, of some of these great libraries, their mere *extent* is their *least* recommendation ; what they have, having been *well-selected* ; a point far more important than mere numbers. This fact may be illustrated by reference to the first on the list,—the Library of Göttingen.

The following is the testimony of Mr. Russell, who visited it recently :—

“ The Göttingen library is not only the most complete among the Universities, but there are very few royal or public collections in Germany, which can rival it *in real utility* [and if not in Germany where else?]. It is not rich in MSS., and many other libraries surpass it in typographical rarities and specimens of typographical luxury ; but none contains so great a number of *really useful books*, *in any given branch of knowledge*. *The principle on which they proceed is, to collect the solid learning and literature*

1811, says respecting it in his “ *Tableau de St. Petersbourg, ou Lettres sur la Russie* (8vo, Paris, 1814), pp. 140-141.

* Stein, ii, 410. Munich has, besides, its University library, containing 160,000 printed books. A more particular account may be found in Von Schaden’s *Beschreibung der Hauptstadt München*, 2d edit. (1833), p. 78.

† I believe there are several other libraries—some in Italy, for instance—which should be added to this first list ; but I have not just now at hand the means of verifying the conjecture. The library of the Vatican is certainly very extensive ; but I have not been able readily to find its number of volumes. Vasi, after describing its rarities, &c. speaks of it as “ arrichita collo spoglio di moltissime librerie di Europa ; e di altrove ancora ; tanto che in oggi non vi è una simile.”—*Itinerario di Roma* (1777), p. 503. This library is divided into three portions ; the first, open, I understand, very freely to every one ; the second, kept somewhat more privately ; and the third, a sort of *sanctum sanctorum*, only to be visited with special permission.

‡ Report to Appendix, pp. 525, et seq. Paris has five other *public* libraries (exclusive of those of the University, the Chambers, &c. &c.) which contain 476,000 printed books, and 18,000 MSS. ; so that there are in Paris at least 1,300,000 volumes, open to all who desire to consult them. In the various departments of France there are nearly 250 *provincial* public libraries : among the most considerable are those of Bordeaux (115,000), Lyons (100,000), Aix (75,000), Besançon (56,000), Amiens (48,000), Versailles (40,000) Marseilles (35,000), Toulouse (30,000), &c.

of the world, not the curiosities and splendours of the printing art. If they have twenty pounds to spend, instead of buying some very costly edition of one book, they very wisely buy ordinary editions of four or five*."

As to foreign *classed catalogues*, I shall content myself with referring to two examples; first, that of this same library of Göttingen—an exposition of which is appended to this Letter; and, secondly, to that of St. Petersburgh—an excellent account of which is given in the first Return, pages 18 and 19 (Sessional Papers, 209); and again in the Appendix to the Report, p. 464, et seq. The first and best example, too, it should be remembered, is actually within the British dominions.

Do I, then, assume too much in asserting, that the *necessity* of an improvement in the British Museum, in respect of its intercourse with foreign museums and libraries, is *fully proven*?

Can we believe that if there *had been* such efficient intercourse, the general selection of books—the supply of continental literature—and, above all, the state and system of *catalogues* at the British Museum, would have been what they now are? Why, very shame must have brought about *some* improvement.

Is it not, then, highly expedient that there should be attached to the Museum, either an officer expressly charged with the duty of maintaining such intercourse, or a presiding director, of whose duty it should form a part?

IV.—DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION.

I come now, in the last place—as far as regards the library—to speak of the organization of departments.

The library includes two departments: 1. of Printed Books; 2. of MSS. There is also a principal *librarian*, so called, apparently, because he has neither books nor MSS. to take care of.

The superintendence of catalogues forms a part of the regular duties of the respective keepers of the two departments, according to the statutes in force. The Rev. Mr. Horne, upon whose

* *Russell's Tour in Germany*, vol. i, p. 252 (Edin. 1828). On this subject see also App. No. 2.

plan the classed catalogue was commenced, and pursued for several years, appears to be employed under the direction of the keeper of the printed books, the Rev. Mr. Baber [2433]: his salary is £360 a year [Returns, 1833]. The other gentlemen engaged on the catalogues appear to be (and to have been for years) employed *by the day*: they are described as "fresh clerks."

[340.] Have any new officers been created since the 25th of March 1833 [date of Returns]?—I believe none; but one or two fresh clerks have been employed.

[341.] In what department?—The temporary employment of Dr. Rosen, for the Catalogue of Oriental MSS.; and Dr. Schier is employed on the Catalogue of books in the Sclavonian language, and in the other dialects of the north of Europe.

[342.] Have any assistants been appointed?—The two whom I have just mentioned.

[343.] Are those temporary or permanent employments?—Temporary employments.

[344.] Did any body precede Dr. Rosen in that employment?—Not in the same employment. A gentleman of the name of Stevenson left us, and then Mr. Mitchell was allowed to extend his time, and Dr. Rosen taken into employ, being limited as to the number of days to be given in the month. The keeper of the manuscripts can explain this more fully.

[345.] There has been an assistant keeper of the printed books appointed, I believe?—Three persons have lately been temporarily employed in that department to transcribe titles.

[346.] With respect to the general superintendence of the collections entrusted to the trustees, what security is there that the integrity of the different collections is perfectly preserved?—The officers of each department give security to the trustees, and for their own safety will watch narrowly for the preservation of everything under their care.

[347.] You say the officers give security?—Yes.

[348.] Do they take any security, or are any securities given by those persons who are under them?—No.

[349.] Is it not, therefore, necessary that the eye of the principal officer should be constantly over the inferior persons who must be employed in that business?—Yes.

[350.] Are those inferior persons employed by the officers who give security, or are they appointed by another body that has nothing to do with it?—They are appointed by the three principal trustees.

[351.] And yet it is through those persons, if any loss should arise, that the loss would be most likely to occur?—In most of the departments the officers only keep the keys of the cases and tables.

[372.] Will you inform the Committee of the salary of the Deputy-assistant librarians generally? Is there a scale of salary in the Museum?—No; some are paid 10s. a day; some 12s.; Dr. Rosen receives 20s. a day. These gentlemen are only paid for the days of their attendance, the days on which they perform their duty. They are almost all paid under different agreements.

[373.] What is the rule you attend to in apportioning a proper salary to each officer?—The trustees settle that in Committee; though in the case of one gentleman, who had 12s. a day, I think he has now 15s., in consequence of his services being very effective, and of his superior fitness.

[374.] Do the trustees directly sanction this daily pay to literary men?—They conceive they obtain more efficient services, I believe, by this mode of payment, than by giving a salary; and they can relieve the institution from the encumbrance of the employ, when the necessity for it ceases.

Is this a state of things which ought to continue?

The salaries, taken generally throughout the Museum, seem less than they ought to be, *for the duties to be thoroughly performed*. There is, consequently, a highly injudicious plurality of offices in the Museum itself; and a frequent combination of other employments with Museum offices, utterly incompatible with the efficient discharge of either. Sir Henry Ellis receives a salary of £500 as principal librarian; after stating that he holds the office of joint secretary to the Society of Antiquaries, and receives for it a salary of 150 guineas, adds, “If I did not, I could not afford to be principal librarian of the British Museum” [283]. Is not this a disgrace to the trustees of the Museum? Surely, its principal librarian should receive a salary large enough to render it at least *unnecessary* for him to hold any other office.

Mr. Forshall holds the situations both of keeper of the MSS. and secretary; receiving for the former a salary of £425*, and other emoluments £15; and for the latter £100 a year. He says himself that “the duties of keeper of the MSS. would very well fill up the whole time of any one individual” [731]; and

* I have taken the return *for* 1832 as my guide. The *last* column of the Return states the salaries of Messrs. Forshall and Baber respectively at £162..10s. *for three months*, to 25th March 1833. I suspect this to be a misprint (?) because there is no alteration in that of the principal librarian. If it be not, then the salaries of these gentlemen must have been raised, in 1833, from £425 to £650 a year, the salary of the principal librarian remaining £500 a year. This is not probable.

that the assistants in the MS. department render to the secretary services to the amount, perhaps, of £50 a year [730]. Why then are not these two offices separated, the salary of keeper of the MSS. made sufficient of itself, and a fitting salary attached to the office of secretary? Is £100 such a salary for the secretary of the British Museum?

The accountant, too, receives *thirty pounds* a year, and is also *collector of books due under the copyright act!*

Mr. Baber, keeper of the printed books, receives (with emoluments as stationery, &c. £15) £440 a year [Appendix to Report 371]. As editor of the Alex. MS., in the years 1820-1-2-3, Mr. Baber also received £1017, or, on an average, about £280 a year; and in the year 1828, £262..10s. He now holds a living, in the county of Cambridge, of the gross value of £900 a year, conferred upon him by the Crown for the services rendered to biblical literature by the editing of that MS. [Appendix, *ibid.*] This was, doubtless, a deserved mark of royal favour; but is it *the way* in which such a service should be rewarded? Is there no better way of rewarding the keeper of a public library for editing a valuable MS. contained therein, and printed at the national expense, than that of conferring on him an office, in order to discharge the solemn duties of which efficiently, he *must neglect his former* duties—the duties of that very office, namely, which enabled him to earn the right to the reward? Again I ask, Ought not the salary of a keeper of a department in the British Museum to be made sufficient *in itself*? If it *were* made so, can we doubt that Mr. Baber would no longer hold a living in Cambridge, or Sir Henry Ellis a secretaryship to the Antiquarian Society; and that, therefore, they would become *better able* to discharge the duties of their respective offices, “with reference (to use Mr. Forshall’s words) to an increased utility to the public on their part” [888]? If this were done, as it ought to be done, in the cases of assistants as well as of heads of departments, can we doubt, too, that we should no longer find a gentleman, holding the office of assistant-keeper, requesting permission to make extensive researches, for private purposes, in certain offices *known to be only accessible, under any circumstances, within the*

hours of ordinary Museum duties; and writing—"I have for many years been employed in pursuits of an historical and topographical nature, and particularly in collections for a history of the county of Hants; and it is of the utmost importance to those pursuits, that I should be enabled to consult freely the mass of original and inedited documents preserved in the various record offices*." And this at a time when it was necessary to employ Dr. Rosen, Dr. Schier, and other "fresh clerks" at ten shillings a-day, to get on with the cataloguing of some thousand volumes of undescribed MSS. May it not safely be asserted, that a scale of salaries and system of management which produce such results need *immediate* revisal?

May we not, in fine, believe, that if the system of the Museum government were thoroughly reformed, we should even not look in vain for its officers to emulate those whom we admire abroad, and to say, for example, with Mr. Jæck, the assiduous librarian of Bamberg: "I hold it the duty of every director, or other chief officer of a national institution, to lay before the public, from time to time, an ample account as well of its general condition and management as of the continuance or improvement of its former regulations†;" and after acting up to the opinion, and performing the arduous tasks which it involves, to be able to conclude them in the words of Delandine,

* Sir Frederic Madden to the Record Commissioners, dated British Museum, Jan. 3, 1833, requesting permission to copy records without paying fees.—*Proceedings of the Record Commission*, 1832, vol. i, page 56.

† "Ich rechne zur Pflicht der Verwalter aller öffentlichen Anstalten, dasz sie von zeit zu zeit dem Publikum eine ausführliche Rechenschaft vorlegen, wie sie die selben eingerichtet und verwaltet, oder deren früher bestandene Ordnung fortgesetzt haben." After alluding to the motives, difficulties, and partial accomplishment of his work, he thus concludes, "Meine grosse Mühe für die Beschreibung der Bibliothek opfere ich gerne dem Vaterlande, und den Wissenschaften, wie ich der selben mein jährliches Dienstes-gehalt von 300 Fl. seit vielen Jahren schon gewidmet habe." "*Vollständige Beschreibung der öffentlichen Bibliothek zu Bamberg, von H. J. Jæck.*" 1r. Th. 8o. Nurnb. 1831. This last is, certainly, an example which *ought not* to be followed. *We*, however, may very safely say, with regard to the danger of it, what Benjamin Constant once said of that of enthusiasm— "Je ne vois pas que le feu soit à la maison."

keeper of the public library at Lyons, after completing his catalogue of its MSS.—“Ces notices ont occupé sans relâche, sans distraction, sans jouir d'aucune vacance, plusieurs années de ma vie ; j'eusse pu les consacrer à des écrits plus flatteurs pour l'imagination, plus agréables à composer, comme à lire ; j'ai pensé qu'avant tout il fallait s'efforcer de remplir sa place, et les obligations qui y paraissent attachées”*.

I have now gone through—I feel in a very imperfect manner—the four chief matters I proposed to examine with regard to the library of the Museum. I trust I have, at least, shewn that, as respects ACCESSIBILITY, a large number of persons highly fit to make good use of a great public library, are by the present regulations *entirely excluded* from it, and that it is quite possible so to alter those regulations as to remove this evil without creating any other;—that, as respects SUPPLY OF BOOKS, there are very serious deficiencies, which certainly ought to be, and easily may be, removed; and that there is a law which, because it imposes a partial tax and does not attain its avowed object, ought immediately to be re-considered;—that, as regards STATE OF CATALOGUES, there are, at present, such serious defects as greatly to impair the usefulness of the library; defects which prove extreme neglect on the part of the governing body, and call loudly for immediate and efficient reformation;—and that, as regards DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION, there is need of more efficient responsibility, of better division of labour, and of a better arrangement as to the salaries of officers.

The two important departments of antiquities and of natural history, and the general constitution of the Museum government, remain for future consideration. The intimate connexion of that constitution, and the deficiencies of those departments, as cause and effect, will, I believe, become very obvious so soon as the evidence bearing thereupon be attentively considered. In the departments of natural history and antiquities, the organization is more defective and the responsibility less clear

* Delandine, *Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Lyon*, 1812, page 31.

and tangible than in the two departments which have been the particular subject of this Letter. In the first are huddled together zoology, botany and mineralogy, with their innumerable subdivisions, all in a single department, with a single head, yet presenting the while many of the evils of utter isolation. In the second, the extensive collections of ancient marbles, of coins and medals, and of prints, have, again, but one responsible keeper. Every where we find great want of effective assistants and of division of labour; very imperfect and unequal collections; extremely defective classification and description; and a general absence of any thing like harmony of purpose in the whole. And all this notwithstanding the expenditure of nearly a million and a quarter of the public money, in addition to the bequests and donations of many munificent benefactors, and the assiduous but shackled and isolated labours of many able officers. Surely, this need not last for ever?

I have thought, Sir, that it could not but facilitate the objects of the inquiry, if, in this stage of it, were circulated a sort of scheme of the principal topics which it involves—something of which the “Heads of Inquiry” appended to this Letter may be considered a rude outline. The inquiry, keeping in view its ultimate end—a system of *radical* improvement, to quote again the words of Sir Humphry Davy—necessarily involves many matters of opinion, which it would seem well to bring under the notice of men whose opinions would carry weight and claim respect; more *directly* than by the ordinary and casual channels of information. With these views, I respectfully submit them to your consideration.

I cannot quit the mention of this outline of inquiry without adverting particularly to one suggestion contained in it,—Whether or not it would be desirable to open the Museum collections on Sundays? For myself, I am by no means satisfied upon it. But the *consideration* of the question is imperatively called for, and that without delay. No one can have walked through the more crowded and obscure parts of London on a Sunday, with an observant eye, without shuddering at the dreadful amount of utter idleness, degradation, and consequent drunken-

ness, and almost every other vice, then so particularly observable. It is, therefore, a serious question, How may these evils be lessened?—How may that day—which, when made the especial day of man's better part, of his mind and soul, is, indeed, the best day,—be rescued from the stain of ministering to vice and crime, by affording temptation and opportunity for their indulgence? Is it true that Sunday does so minister, *because it is a day without employment?* If so, surely in the cause of the evil we have a key to the remedy. Give employment—employment for the mind, for the affections and sympathies; provide the means, and induce and stimulate to their exercise. Will preaching and reading *alone* afford these? I fear not. To suppose a man of the lower classes in a populous city, quietly and contentedly spending his one day of rest in attending religious services, in reading, and in domestic and social converse, presupposes a degree of mental and moral cultivation, which, alas! is rarely to be found there. Let us not, then, deceive ourselves in this matter. The man possessed of the power (and who has not some?) who will do nothing to check vice because he cannot put what he deems religion, all at once, in its place—who will not aid in keeping his fellows from the gin-shop and the gambling-house, because he cannot make them go to church, has learnt Christianity somewhere else than in the lessons of its Divine Teacher. Every thing which extends a man's sympathies, which makes him a social rather than a selfish being, and which leads him to seek his pleasures beyond mere sensual gratification, is a good, just in proportion to the strength of the contrary influences which ordinarily act upon him. To the dense population of entire districts of this great city such contrary influences are almost as the very air they breathe. May not, then, an opportunity afforded—an inducement *held out* to such persons—to visit with their families or friends collections of works of fine art, of natural history, of antiquities, do *some* good? May it not, at the least, supply innocent amusement—excite a desire for information—give something to look forward to and to reflect back upon? May it not be a good,—first, as a means of mental and moral cultivation preparatory to the employment of means of a higher order; and,

secondly,—in the case of those without other opportunities—of giving information and creating taste in a way by no means prejudicial to other and more serious engagements before or afterwards? I repeat, the question deserves serious and dispassionate consideration.

On one topic, Sir, of much interest I have looked in vain for satisfactory elucidation both in the Report and its Appendix: I refer to several valuable collections alleged to have been lost to the British Museum, and in a great measure to the public, by the fault or neglect of the Museum itself.

Mr. Gough, the celebrated antiquarian, is said, by some of those who knew him, to have frequently spoken of the British Museum as the best place of deposit for topographical and historical collections, with reference to public utility; to have regretted its very imperfect state; and to have expressed a positive intention to bequeath to it his own valuable collections—the labour of his life. It is also said, he earnestly desired to become a trustee of the Museum; but, although he would seem to have been a very fit man,—except that he did not belong to the aristocracy,—he was disappointed. *He bequeathed his collections to the Bodleian Library in the University of Oxford;* where, of course, they are *comparatively* useless.

[1467.] Did Mr. Richard Gough, who was a celebrated antiquary, ever offer to endow the Museum with a collection of books and manuscripts relating to Northern and Saxon literature, and British topography?—He at one time had an intention to leave his collection to the British Museum, but he changed his mind, and left it to the Bodleian Library.

[1468] Will you state whether you are aware of any grounds for that change of intention?—No; I was very intimate with Mr. Gough, but he never, that I remember, stated positively the grounds upon which he changed his mind.

[1469] Did he desire to be made a trustee of the British Museum?—I have heard him say he should have been very glad to have been a trustee of the British Museum, but I do not know that he ever took any steps to make his wishes known to the trustees.

[1470.] Did he in any way, directly or indirectly, connect the presentation of his library to the Museum with the honour of his being named a trustee?—Certainly not.

MINUTE of the TRUSTEES of the BRITISH MUSEUM, dated 18th February, 1804, relative to a Letter from *Richard Gough*, Esq.

At a Committee, the following Letter from *Richard Gough*, Esq. to Mr. *Beloe* was laid before the Committee :—

Sir,

Desirous to preserve from the fate which too frequently attends such articles, the plates of the Sepulchral Monuments of Great Britain, and others which belong to the different works that I have published, it is my wish to present them to that great national depository, the British Museum ; subject, however, to one condition, that myself, my representatives, or any person properly authorized by me or them, may, on such application to the Trustees, in Committee, as they may prescribe, have liberty to call for them, singly or all together, for the republication of any of the works to which they severally belong, or for the accommodation of similar works.

Should this proposal meet the approbation of the Trustees, it is my intention, at some future period, to offer to their acceptance what I have the vanity to consider as nearly a complete collection of British Topography, in MSS., printed books, drawings, and prints,—on this condition, that it may be preserved altogether in a room, or on the side or sides of a room, on the first floor ; and, as many of the articles are accompanied with loose papers, notes, &c., that they may be exempted from the usual rule of being carried into the Reading-Room, but perused in the apartment of the Principal Librarian, who shall determine on the propriety of making or publishing extracts from the MSS.

I am, &c.

(Signed) R. G.

Ordered, that Mr. Beloe acquaint Mr. Gough that the Trustees have thought proper to comply with his request.

Was this such an answer as ought to have been returned to Mr. Gough ? Is “a complete collection of British topography in MSS., drawings, printed books and prints,” so worthless, as that an offer to present it deserves no answer ?

The valuable collections of Mr. Francis Douce, recently deceased, were also bequeathed to the Bodleian Library.

[1475.] I believe Mr. Francis Douce had also a valuable collection of manuscripts?—A collection of books, manuscripts, coins, &c.

[1476.] Was he not at one time keeper of the manuscripts in the Museum?—Yes.

[1477.] Why did he resign?—I cannot tell you, except that it was his pleasure so to do.

[1478.] Were there any reasons assigned?—He never assigned any reason that I remember.

[1479.] Will you state, for the information of the Committee, what reasons were assigned by general report for his resigning his office of keeper of the manuscripts?—I really do not recollect at this moment; but I conceive he felt a disinclination to give up his time, so much as the collection of manuscripts required. He was a strictly honourable man. He preferred ease. He had an independent income, and he retired from the Museum. His health was not always good.

Why was not Mr. Douce made a trustee?

In conclusion, Sir, may I venture to express my earnest hope, that this inquiry will be prosecuted with renewed vigour and perseverance? Some good it has done already; it may, it must effect much more. If, after clear proof of the existence of so much room for improvement; after such large admissions from its own officers; after the collection of so many models and examples for its benefit, the British Museum be *not* improved effectively, what can we hope for attempts at improvements which have yet to be begun? If, after great labour, large expenditure, and with a growing perception on the part of the people and of the government of the wisdom and policy of large expenditure for such purposes, the British Museum do *not* really become a “great national storehouse, and collection of standard authority in literature, art, and science,” and a powerful instrument in universal education—what can we hope for institutions of which the very foundation stone has yet to be laid? I will not, indeed, say with Bishop Spratt (speaking of the Royal Society), that, “if posterity shall find that an institution so vigorously begun, and so strengthened by signal advantages, could not support itself,” to the full attainment of its great objects, that then “they will have reason at all times to conclude that the long barrenness of knowledge was not caused by the corrupt method that was taken, but by the nature of the thing itself, and that therefore we shall be guilty of the errors of all those that come after us;” this I will not say, because it seems to me to belie the best and truest aspirations of our nature, which point us to continual progression; but I do think that, “if this enterprize should chance to fall short of its purpose, we shall not only be frus-

trated of our present expectations, but will have just ground to despair of any future labours*” of *our own time* in the same cause. I anticipate, however, a far better result. I trust that as well those who are at present the directors of our National Museum, as those upon whom the conduct of this inquiry and the future application of it may rest—recognizing a common interest in the removal of every existing abuse, and the adoption of every real improvement,—will take for their motto, with a happier fortune in acting up to it, that assumed by a small party in a neighbouring country, who, stronger in sympathy than in will, left little behind them but their name:—

“Secta fuit, servare modum, finemque tenere
 Naturamque sequi, patriæque impendere vitam;
 Nec sibi, sed toti genitum se credere mundo.”

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your faithful, humble servant,

EDWARD EDWARDS.

12, IDOL LANE, CITY,
 Feb. 16, 1836.

* Spratt, History of the Royal Society.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

HEADS OF INQUIRY RELATIVE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF
THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

PRELIMINARY NOTE.

THE annexed "Heads of Inquiry relative to the British Museum" are to be regarded as *indications* of the principal points to which may beneficially be turned the attention of all persons anxious to extend the utility of that valuable institution, and therefore interested in the present inquiry,—but by no means as forming any definite scheme or plan of alteration. In general, they have been suggested either by the evidence already taken before the Committee, or by the returns obtained for its information respecting similar institutions abroad, which are printed in the Appendix to the Report.

Opinions, whether for or against any of the following suggestions (many of which, it will be seen, are in antagonism to each other), are earnestly invited, as are any further suggestions calculated to promote the object of this inquiry—the utmost possible realization of the great national purposes for which the British Museum was originally founded.

1. Of the Department of Manuscripts.
2. _____ Printed Books.
3. _____ Antiquities.
4. _____ Natural History.
5. Of the Reading-room.
6. Of Museum Publications.
7. _____ Buildings.
8. Of the General Accommodation of the Public.
9. Of the Government of the Museum.
 - I. Departmental Organization.
 - II. Managing or Directing Board.
 - III. Ultimate Control.
10. Of the means by which Government, both legislative and executive, may best promote the objects of the Museum.
11. Of suggested Improvements in general.

I.—DEPARTMENT OF MANUSCRIPTS*.

- Expediency of re-arranging the several collections of MSS.†? order—chronological, historical, or otherwise?
-
- consolidating ditto?
-
- preparing a general CLASSED CATALOGUE of the MSS., indicating such as have been printed?—or, of completing the present unclassed catalogues of the additional MSS., and preparing a general CLASSED INDEX to all the catalogues of MSS. in the Museum, on the plan of that (in 1 vol. folio) to the Harleian Catalogue, by the Rev. T. H. Horne?—or of both?—of printing the same for sale?—and in what form?
-
- a general digest of all the MSS. contained in the Museum, which are illustrative of English history?‡—of printing the same for sale?—in what form?
-
- publishing, periodically or otherwise, notices of and extracts from the MSS. in the Museum, in the manner of the French work, entitled "*Notices et Extraits des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi?*"

II.—DEPARTMENT OF PRINTED BOOKS.

- Expediency of consolidating the several collections, and arranging them in one connected series of faculties or classes?—of appointing separate assistant-keepers of such faculties or classes?
-
- a periodical collation of the library, with a view,—first, to compare the books with the catalogues; secondly, to collect duplicates? — Means of facilitating such process?

DISPOSITION OF DUPLICATES, by sale?—to form *lending library* attached to Museum?—in aid of such existing permanent libraries, or other provincial institutions, as may

* The arrangement of departments here followed is that which at present exists in the Museum. All the collections being comprehended under four classes, viz. 1, manuscripts; 2, printed books; 3, antiquities; and, 4, natural history. The necessity of a better division, especially in regard of the two latter, is generally admitted; vide "Minutes of Evidence," *passim*.

† At present, papers relating to the same subjects are to be found not only in various collections, but also (and very frequently) scattered, without arrangement, over a great number of volumes in the same collection.

‡ Mr. Planta, the late principal librarian of the British Museum, recommended such a work, as regarded the *Public Records*, in the Museum.—Vide his return to the Record Commission, in their Report of 1800. Select Reports of Commons, vol. xv.

give sufficient security for their proper application and conservation?—in aid of the foundation of branch libraries in the metropolis or provincial towns?—in exchange for books with foreign governments or libraries?

Expediency of a CLASSED CATALOGUE of all the printed books in the Museum, with alphabetical indexes of authors' names?—of printing same, in parts, for public sale?

Comparative utility and necessity of *classed* and *alphabetical* catalogues?—comparative urgency of completing a *classed* catalogue or a new *alphabetical* catalogue for the *immediate wants* of the reading room?—merit of the “Outlines for the Classification of a Library,” submitted to the trustees by the Rev. Thomas Hartwell Horne?—expediency of proceeding with classed and alphabetical catalogues *conjointly*, and with all possible despatch.

III.—DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUITIES.

DIVISION.—Number of distinct departments into which should be subdivided the department of antiquities, which at present includes (nominally) the ancient marbles—such works of modern art as the Museum possesses,—the prints, maps, and topographical collections,—the coins, medals, and gems,—and the miscellaneous artificial curiosities?—responsible keeper to each?

* [565.] *To Sir H. Ellis.*—In the exercise of the same discretion exercised by the trustees in the case of Sir George Beaumont's pictures, would there be any objection to bestowing duplicate books or duplicate objects of curiosity upon district institutions or libraries to be approved by the trustees?—The trustees would, no doubt, give their decision upon each distinct application as it might come before them.

[566.] Have you any objection in principle to such a disposition of the duplicate books or duplicate objects of curiosity in the Museum?—I do not see that there would be any objection in principle; it would make the duplicate objects more useful to the community.

[567.] And consistently with the principle acted upon in the case of Sir George Beaumont's pictures?—Yes; and consistently with the Act of 47 George III.

[568.] *To Mr. Forshall.*—Having heard what Sir Henry Ellis has stated, will you favour the Committee with your opinion on this subject?—I think there would be no objection whatever so to dispose of objects not given to the trustees; it would be a very useful thing to do with respect to certain classes of duplicates: by duplicates, I mean surplus objects, such as are not important for the purposes of the Museum.

ANCIENT MARBLES—

Expediency of separate department? utility of multiplying casts from the marbles, *and from bronzes?*

————— appointing *formatôre* (or moulder) to the collection, as at the Louvre?—mode of payment—by salary? by fees? or by sale of casts?

————— forming a collection of casts from marbles in other countries?

COINS, MEDALS, AND GEMS—

Expediency of separate department?—best mode of exhibiting them openly*?—whether by originals? or by casts?—ARRANGEMENT—chronological, historical—illustrative of metallic art?

Disposal of duplicates—by sale—*presentation to provincial institutions, or otherwise?*—*Vide "Printed Book Department."*

PRINTS, &c.—

Expediency of separate department?—arrangement?

————— retaining the pictures at present possessed by the Museum?

GENERALLY—

Catalogues—expediency of *classed*?—printed for sale?—and in what form?

Lectures—expediency of attaching lecturers to the departments of arts and antiquities?—Admissions—best mode of regulating the *admission of artists* to study, relatively to the admission of the public at large?

IV.—DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL HISTORY.

BEST SUBDIVISION†?—Number of separate and responsible keepers?

ARRANGEMENT generally?

Expediency of distinct *British* collections in zoology, botany, mineralogy?

————— distinct collections:—as of zoology, to illustrate comparative anatomy, — of entomology, botany, mineralogy, to illustrate the application of insects, vegetables, minerals, to the arts and manufactures; and the like?

————— of attaching to the department of botany a collection of implements used in horticulture, &c.

Classification and nomenclature—best systems of?—utility of distinguishing authorities?—of adding popular names?

* *Vide Minutes of Evidence, [3530-3536].*

† Departmental arrangements of the *Museum Royal d'Histoire Naturelle*, at Paris:—Zoologie. Mammifères & Oiseaux—Zoologie. Reptiles & Poissons—Insectes, coquilles, madrépores, &c.—Anatomie de l'Homme—Anatomie des Animaux—Botanique—Mineralogie—Geologie—Iconographie—Chimie des Arts—Chimie générale.—*Annales du Museum* (4^o Paris, 1819), De Leuze, *Histoire, &c.* vol. 1.

Expediency of attaching to the Museum professors to deliver public lectures on the sciences connected with natural history; and of providing laboratories, with all necessary apparatus, &c. for the purpose?

- a separate library of natural history, arranged in classes—and of select reference libraries to the several departments, for the especial use of the officers?
- attaching to each natural-history-department certain students or supernumeraries, who might be educated to become efficient officers of the establishment?
- detailed classed catalogues of the contents of the several departments?—in MS.? or printed?—and of concise and cheap *manuals* printed for sale?

Synopsis.—scientific? popular? or both? expediency of selling latter at prime cost?

Disposition of duplicates — by sale — *presentation to provincial institutions* or otherwise—*vide "Printed Book Department."*

- attaching to the Museum a public laboratory capable of subserving the various purposes of chemical analysis and experiment, &c. required by the Boards of Agriculture, Ordnance, and Public Works?

V.—READING ROOM.

Expediency of the presence of an assistant librarian in the reading-room?—method of more effectually checking the due return of books taken into the reading-room, both with reference to individuals and to the library?

- extending the hours during which the reading-room is accessible?—of opening it during the evening?—precautionary measures against danger from fire?
- building a separate room for evening readers, under distinct regulations?

VI.—MUSEUM PUBLICATIONS.

Expediency of continuing the publication by the Museum of the “Gallery of Antiquities?”

- confining the publications of the Museum to catalogues and manuals or synopses?—whether it be desirable to sell these at prime cost or at a profit?

Disposition of the existing stock of the various publications*?

* Vide Returns to Parliament, 1833, in Appendix to Report of Select Committee. The number of volumes now remaining in stock of publications between 1821 and 1823 appears to be about 3570: of the stock of earlier publications there is no return.

Expediency of printing within the Museum, or by public contract?

VII.—MUSEUM BUILDINGS.

Expediency of re-considering the plans for the new buildings?

————— appointing a committee, comprehending all the heads of departments in the Museum, to examine and report upon the plans, as respects the accommodation required for such departments respectively? — improved system of warming and ventilating buildings?

VIII.—OF THE GENERAL ACCOMMODATION OF THE PUBLIC.

Expediency of opening the Museum *daily, throughout the year*; and in order thereto of so arranging the holidays and vacations of the officers, and attendants, as that they shall be holidays and vacations of individuals, not of the entire establishment?

Whether the necessary cleansing, repairing, and arranging might be efficiently performed consistently with the carrying into effect the last suggestion? — if not, whether it be preferable that any necessary interruptions of the public access for such purposes, should occur at the periods of public festivals, such as Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, or at some other periods?

Expediency of opening the various collections, for a certain number of hours, on Sundays, throughout the year*?

IX.—OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE MUSEUM.

1.—*Organization of Departments.*

Number of departments into which the Museum should be divided?

Expediency of a separate keeper to each, responsible for the arrangement, description, and conservation of the several collections under his charge?

————— subdividing each department into sections, according to its extent, and of attaching to each an assistant-keeper, responsible to the head of the department?

————— vesting in the heads of departments respectively the nomination and appointment, under certain limitations, of all subordinate officers and attendants in their several departments; or the nomination of such, subject to the approval of the board of directors or trustees?

* See "Letter," ante p. 43.

Expediency of placing at the disposal of each head of a department a certain sum annually, for the exclusive purposes of maintaining and increasing the collections of his department?—and under what restrictions?

Is it expedient that the officers be interdicted from forming private collections of objects similar to those under their respective charge?

Expediency of a regulation, that no resolution to purchase any collection whatever shall be carried by the Board, unless a written report shall have been first laid before it by the head of the department to which such collection appertains, on the character, value, and desirableness thereof; and that, in like manner, no petition or memorial shall be presented to Parliament for a grant in aid of the purchase of any collection whatever, unless to such petition or memorial there shall be appended a report as aforesaid?

————— **abolishing the office of accountant, as at present held in the Museum (conjointly with that of collector of books due under the copyright act), and of confiding the responsibility for accounts, return to Parliament, &c. to a secretary, who shall be incompetent to hold any other office in the Museum, and who shall perform all the duties of Secretary in relation to the internal economy thereof?**

————— **a resident principal director or librarian, responsible for the general correspondence, and for maintaining a regular intercourse with similar institutions and learned persons abroad or at home, and to be considered the responsible organ of the Museum at all times?**

————— **a regulation, that no person shall hold more than one situation in the Museum at the same time?**

————— **a scale of retiring pensions for officers and servants, graduated according to length of service?**

2.—Board of Management.

Number of trustees or directors to constitute governing board?

Expediency of trustees or directors, *ex officio*, in church or state?

————— **trustees or directors by inheritance, or as the representatives of persons presenting, bequeathing, or selling collections to the Museum?**

————— **trustees or directors nominated by Parliament to watch over the appropriation of parliamentary grants?**

————— **trustees or directors as presidents of certain chartered societies connected with learning and the arts?**

- Expediency of the officers at the heads of the respective departments into which the Museum may be divided, being members, *ex officio*, of the board of directors or trustees?
-
- trustees or directors being elected as distinguished authors or inventors in literature, science, or art?
-
- trustees or directors in part retiring by rotation every year; and in what proportion?
-
- trustees or directors receiving a fixed annual salary for their services?
-
- trustees or directors, electing from amongst themselves a president and treasurer, annually or otherwise*; and of electing the same, subject to the approval of the minister under whose official control the Museum may be placed; or of nominating two or more candidates for the selection of such minister?
-
- the Board of Directors, or the principal director for the time being, making reports of the progress, condition, wants, and prospects of the Museum, year by year? presenting same to Parliament?—publishing for sale?
-
- vesting nomination, *in the first instance*, of the heads of departments in the hands of government?
-
- confining the trustees to the duties of trustees as such?
-
- vesting the ULTIMATE CONTROL of the Museum in the Secretary of State for the Home Department, or in any other minister that may be hereafter charged with the superintendence of public instruction?

X.—*Of the Means by which the Objects of the British Museum may be best promoted by the Exertions of Government, both legislative and executive.*

Means of establishing an interchange of books, antiquities, objects of natural history, &c. with foreign governments and institutions:—as of the former, by the mutual exchange of a copy of every book published in the respective countries?—of the latter, by presentation of duplicates?

Expediency of employing travelling naturalists, and others, to collect for the Museum in foreign countries; and whether such be better employed by Government, or by the directors of the Museum?

employing naturalists, persons versed in antiquities, &c. to accompany expeditions of discovery, sent out under the directions of the Admiralty; for similar purposes?

* Vide Return relating to *Jardin des Plantes*, Appendix to Report, 32.

Expediency of general instructions to British ministers, consuls, and other agents of government abroad, to correspond with the Museum, and to advance its objects by all means within their respective powers?

Means by which the library of the British Museum should be supplied with all new and valuable works published in the United Kingdom?—By continuing the enactments of 54 Geo. III, by which the Museum, together with ten other libraries, is entitled to the gratuitous delivery of a copy of every published book; and taking more effectual means to enforce execution thereof?—By repeal of so much of those enactments as relates to the less important libraries?—By a complete repeal of those enactments, and substitution, in lieu thereof, of a compulsory delivery, and *purchase* of copies at certain fixed prices, or at a certain proportion of the retail price; or by compulsory delivery of a periodical list of all books published, in order to selection therefrom, and purchase as before?—or by some other means?

Expediency of a modification of the law of patents, for the purpose of securing to the British Museum a model of every new invention for which a patent may hereafter be granted.

placing in the library of the Museum the *parliamentary papers* of each session, *at the time of their delivery to the libraries of Parliament**? and the stamp office copy of the current Newspapers *at the end of every quarter*?

XI.—OF SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS IN GENERAL.

Expediency of making the Museum a place of deposit for such works of modern art as may be purchased by government?

forming a collection of designs, models, &c. illustrative of arts and manufactures, and of designs, descriptions, and models of new inventions?

GENERALLY.—Means by which the Museum may most efficiently be made “the great national storehouse of literature, arts and sciences,” and by which its utility, in all its several departments, may be most extensively increased?

* At present they are sometimes delayed for two years, and the newspapers for a still longer period.

APPENDIX.

No. II.

NOTICE OF THE GÖTTINGEN LIBRARY,
AND ESPECIALLY OF ITS SYSTEM OF CATALOGUES.

Extracted from "Christian Gottlob Heyne's Biographisch dargestellt, von A. H. L. Heeren." 8o. Göttingen, 1812.

AFTER stating, that in the very year in which Heyne came to Göttingen as second librarian, the entire control of the library was committed to him, and he became chief; and that no further proof is needed of the library owing the pre-eminence it attained, in his time, immediately to his own exertions, his biographer proceeds:—

"The wide, useful, and even glorious field here opened for all his activity, Heyne suffered not to be lost. Happily his early life had familiarized him with libraries and their arrangements; and through the generous liberality of the men who then governed the state in which he lived, he soon saw himself possessed of the means to create an institution which should be alike worthy of the University and of them; and to carry into execution an idea which, at the very beginning, he had conceived, and of which he never lost sight. The idea was none other, than to form a collection which should possess all the STERLING works [Werke welche ein Wissenschaftlichen werth haben] in every department of knowledge, and in the literature of every nation, as far as possible, equally: such a collection, formed at a place where a crowd of professors and students were pursuing all the branches of literature and science, promised, he thought, an extensive utility, hardly to be equalled even by the libraries of the greatest capitals."

* * * *

"When Heyne came to Göttingen, it already possessed a library of from 50 to 60,000 volumes, which, compared with those of most universities, was considerable. At his decease, it had increased, according to the most moderate computation (and without counting recent extraordinary acquisitions from Helmstadt, &c.), to at least 200,000 volumes. Under Heyne's librarianship it had been, therefore, quadrupled. But this increase of number was its smallest claim to admiration. At the commencement of this period, there were entire departments of learning wholly wanting; at its close, not only were these supplied, but the library had become, in this respect, the first,—in that it was proportionably rich in every department. That in other respects—in number of volumes, in MSS., in curiosities—it is greatly surpassed by other libraries, every body knows."

* * * *

It would be interesting to follow the biographer in tracing the manner in which this change was brought about; but want of space forbids. I can only add a very brief description of the system of catalogues: "There are," says Heeren, "four different catalogues connected with each other, like the commercial books in a counting-house."

* * *

"I. Every addition to the library is first entered in the 'MANUAL' of the year. In this are concisely written the title and date of the book, and the day of its reception.

"II. Then the book is entered with its full title in the 'ACCESSION-CATALOGUE,' which also is commenced with every year, and forms at its close four volumes; the first containing the entries of books on *Theology*; 2. *Jurisprudence*; 3, *History*; and, 4, *Miscellanea*. In this catalogue are also entered the form and number of each book, with references to the corresponding entries in the 'Manual.'

"These two first catalogues are intended for the more particular use of the librarians; the remaining two are for the readers.

"III. Is a complete ALPHABETICAL CATALOGUE, in which every book is entered under the author's name, when given; or when not given, but known, then, with a reference thereto under the chief word of title. Every book of which the author's name is not known is entered under such chief word of title; and on one side are also entered the date and form, with references to the entries of the same book in 'Manual' and 'Accession-Catalogue'; on the other, the head in the classed catalogue to which the book belongs. In order to keep a clear alphabetical order, a page is invariably given to every name, or chief word; and when full, such page is taken out, copied, and two inserted in its stead. When the volume becomes too thick it is bound in two.

"IV. Lastly, the book is entered in the CLASSED OR SCIENTIFIC CATALOGUE (*Wissenschaftlichen-Catalog*), according to its subject, and is then placed in that division of the library to which it belongs. Its class and position are also entered in Nos. II and III, as well as in the book itself.

"The first two catalogues serve as registers of increase for each year (*Einnahme-Register*): the alphabetical catalogue answers the question, whether a certain book is in the library, and where it is to be found: the scientific or classed catalogue shews what books are contained in the library on any given subject.

"This is, in brief, the mechanism of the library. A full exposition of it would require the scientific 'Schematismus' on which the whole is based: it would lead us into a survey of knowledge in general, wherein, indeed, the all-encompassing mind of Heyne would be well mirrored, but which would involve a length of detail foreign to the present purpose."

* * *

APPENDIX.

No. III.

IMPERIAL LIBRARY OF ST. PETERSBURGH,

PLAN OF CATALOGUES,

Extracted from the Official Returns.

The Catalogues are,—

1. *Le Catalogue alphabétique des livres, par ordre de matières.*
2. *Le Catalogue alphabétique des auteurs.*
3. *Le Catalogue raisonné, ou les matières seront classées d'après le nouvel ordre bibliographique, avec des observations sur les livres et sur les éditions rares.*

They are thus prepared : The books, already entered in the Catalogues of the several sections of the library, have their titles re-transcribed on separate slips of paper, after the following model :—

No. 1.

	Danicorum Monumentorum Libri Sex: e spissis antiquitatum tenebris et in Dania ac Norvegia extantibus ruderibus eruti ab <i>Oloa Worm.</i> D. Medicinæ in Acad. Haffn. professore publ. Haffniæ, apud Joachimum Moltkenium, Bibliopolam ibidem primar. Aº MDCXLIII.
--	---

Thus prepared, the slips (*feuillets*) are daily distributed among the employés, each charged with a particular division, and taking the titles belonging thereto, which titles are arranged in portfolios, in order to facilitate their assortment. If a book treat of several subjects, it is first entered under that division to which it belongs most immediately, and afterwards under the others. Each employé then inscribes on these slips, severally, the initial letter of title, the author's name, the class, division, section, and position (in the library) of the book, its size and number; thus :—

No. 2.

D.		O. Worm.
Paralipomena Historica. Historia. Archæologia.	Danicorum Monumentorum libri sex: e spissis antiquitatum tenebris et in Dania ac Norvegia extantibus ruderibus eruti ab <i>Oloa Worm.</i> D. Medicinæ in acad. Haffn. Professeore publ. Haffniæ, Apud Joachimum Moltkenium, Bibliopolam ibi- dem primar. Anno MDCXLIII (1643).	VII. B. 1 vol. in fol. N. 3,678.

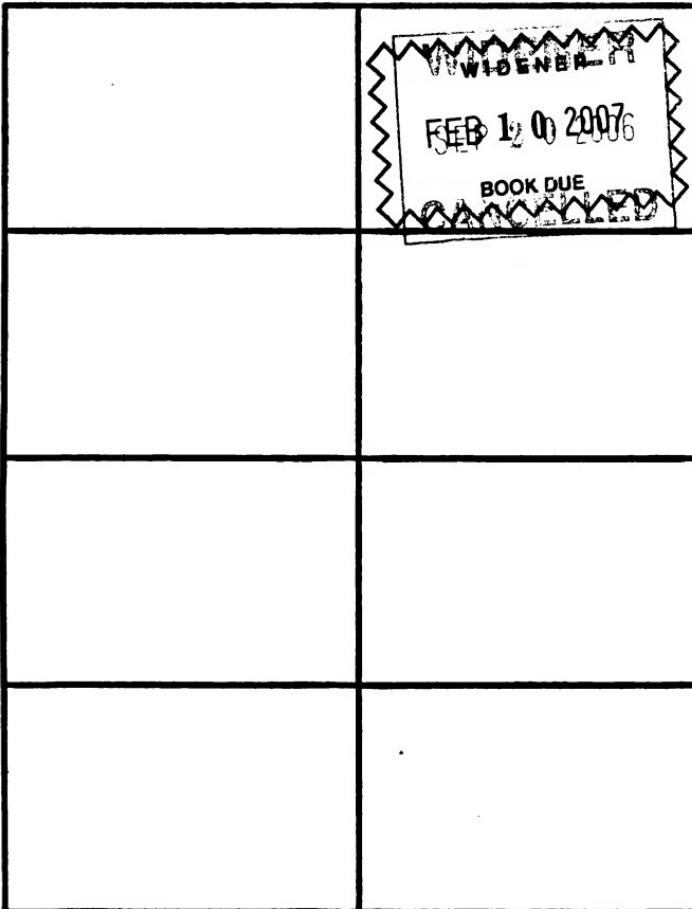
Thus prepared, the 'slip' is passed to the employés engaged on the several catalogues ; 1, to the alphabetical catalogue *by order of subjects* ; 2, to the alphabetical catalogue *by order of authors' names* ; and, lastly, to the catalogue *raisonné*, or *classed catalogue* ; *all of which proceed conjointly*.

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